THE MAGAZINE OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY SIMULATION

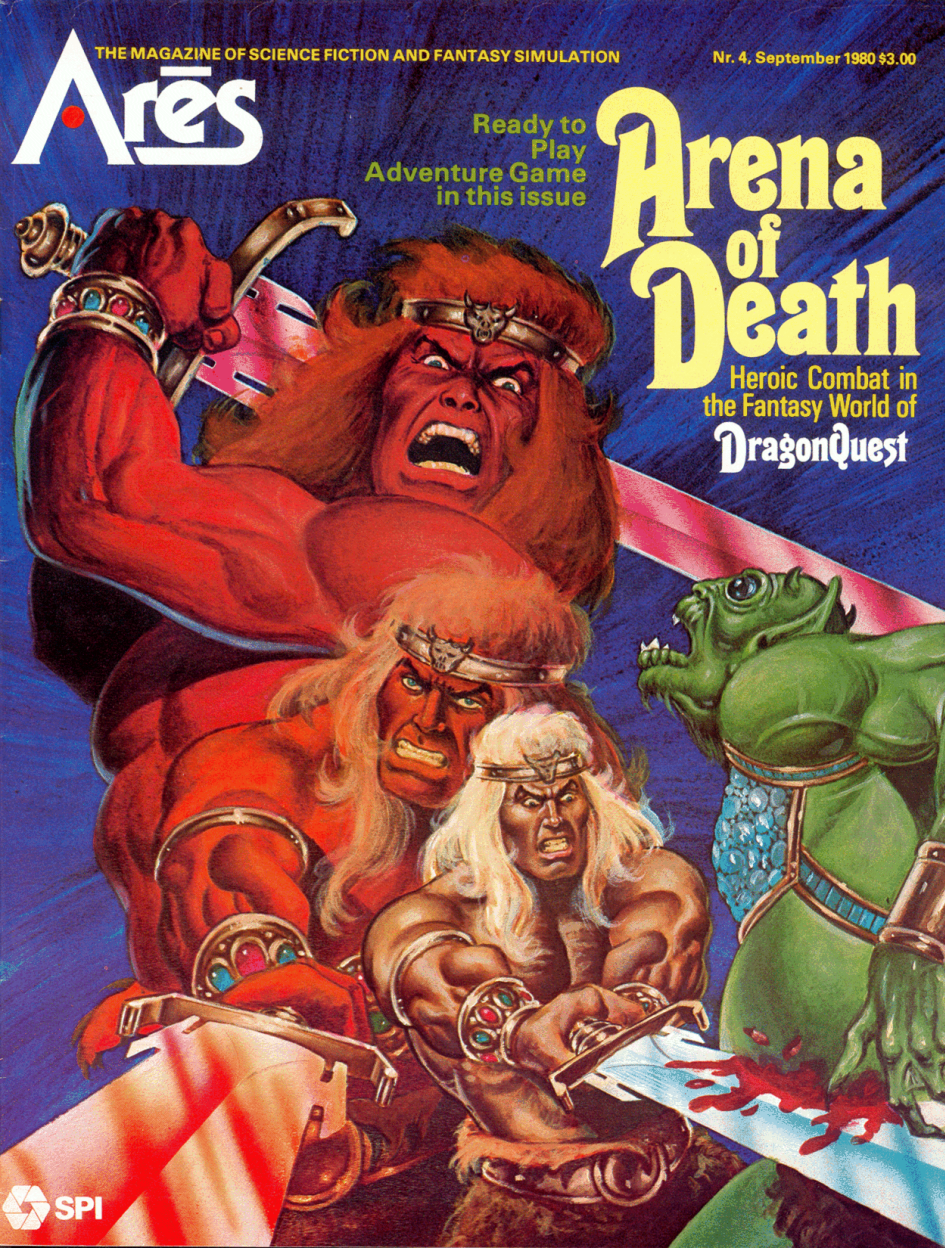
Arēs

Nr. 4, September 1980 $3.00

Ready to Play Adventure Game in this issue

Arena of Death

Heroic Combat in the Fantasy World of DragonQuest



SPI

Nr. 4 September 1980



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THE MAGAZINE OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY SIMULATION

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ENCLOSURES: *DragonQuest* maps and counters for *Arena of Death*; Feedback card, subscription form.

SPI 257 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10010 (212) 673-4103

Muse

In the past few months, we've had the opportunity to meet with two seminars-full of *Ares* subscribers eager to give us their direction on where the magazine should go. Since these seminars were held at gaming conventions, the views of the two groups of readers were, quite naturally, those of readers more interested in game related material than otherwise. Their opinions and obvious desires create something of a philosophical tension.

We designed *Ares* as a cross between a literary magazine and a gaming magazine – an attempt to create something unique, aimed at helping the two story-telling forms (writing and gaming) to lend their strengths to each other. Because of the base from which SPI operates, however, our natural initial audience for *Ares* is more game-oriented than fiction oriented. This doesn't mean the typical *Ares* reader doesn't want to see good fiction in his magazine; it's just that he wants the game related material to dominate.

In this issue we've attempted to serve that manifest desire. We still present about as much fiction as in the past; the difference is that one of the stories directly relates to the game. You'll notice, also, that the non-fiction article specifically ties into the game as well – it's something of a primer on the weapons of the *Arena of Death*.

All this is no reason for the strictly story-loving amongst you to panic – we still are committed to publishing good short fiction – but we're trying to assure that one of the pieces works as a background for the story. As *Ares* grows and spreads, we'll be able to add pages to the magazine and give you even more fiction *and* more game related material.

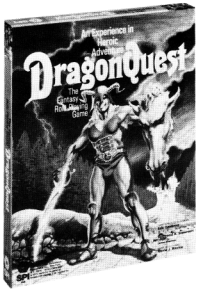
Another item of note in this issue is the appearance of two new columns that we've been wanting to do since *Ares* was an idea – *Facts for Fantasy* and *Science for Science Fiction*. They are new permutations of a time-honored SPI magazine tradition: short bursts of interesting data. Let us know if these bursts are properly aimed.

We're happy to report that SPI's *Creature That Ate Sheboygan* took Best SF Game of the Year at the recent Origins convention. Huzzahs to designer Greg Costikyan (also responsible for *Barbarian Kings* and *DeathMaze*). Introduced at the same convention was our now very popular *DragonQuest* role-playing game. The game in this issue of *Ares* is an offspring of that larger game (as you can tell by the map and counter components). *DragonQuest* promises to be the role-playing game of the eighties (if you can forgive us for a bit of sloganeering).

Help us make *Ares* your *magazine* of the eighties and keep writing and speaking to us to give us the benefit of your thought: we listen and act. *– Redmond*



Cover painting by Joe Jusko, designed by Redmond Simonsen



An Origins 80 SELL-OUT!

See *Arena of Death* in this issue for a preview of the *DragonQuest* combat system.

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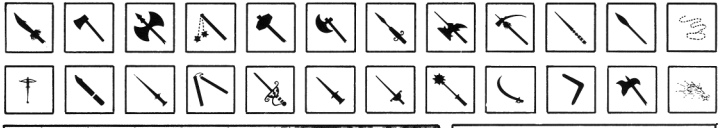
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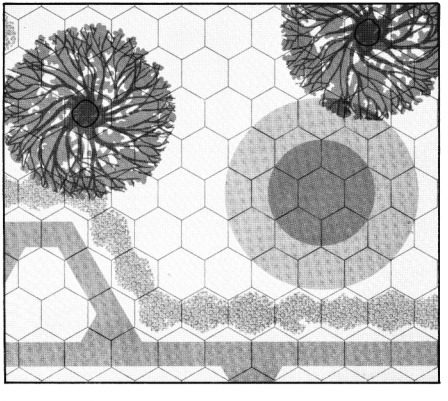
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Easily domesticated	0.5
Naturally wild	1.0
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Domesticated by another beast master	1.0
Caught in wilderness	1.5



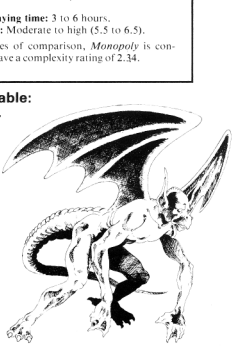


BUYER'S GUIDE FOR *DRAGONQUEST*

Age range: 12 years through adult.
Number of Players: 2 to 8 (low suitability for solitaire).
Average playing time: 3 to 6 hours.
Complexity: Moderate to high (5.5 to 6.5).

For purposes of comparison, *Monopoly* is considered to have a complexity rating of 2.34.

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HILLSONG

by Jayge Carr

ILLUSTRATION BY PETER de SEVE

Darvin tramped steadily across unvarying flatness, velvet-cushioned in living magenta. Behind him, vivid footprints in crushed maroon, redolent of cinnamon and old blood. Further behind, new magenta sprigs crowded voraciously amid the dying blades of their elders, gradually erasing the evidence of his passage.

Thud, thud, thud, he had settled into a mindless, weary trudge, occasionally shifting his burden from one shoulder to the other, a lone figure accompanied only by a thread of fading footprints.

The sentence which he had anticipated and foiled by fleeing would have been — officially — exile; in fact, "exile" was death. But not this step...or this...or this....

Twenty-fourth century humans, spacecrew or civvie, hated the Skinners with a hatred unparalleled in the human history of unlike versus unlike. The human-Skinner conflict — war implies a certain equality — had been bitter enough to scar the psyches of all humanity, even unto the seventh generation. Or duplication, which was far more common.

No human knew the why of it, for no Skinner had ever been captured, and no *sane* survivor rescued. So no human had come back to report seeing or speaking to The Enemy in the flesh. If they had flesh.

But as suddenly as they had come, the ice-blue freeform vessels stopped sweeping through human-occupied space, skimming off the populations of entire worlds — despite the most desperate defenses the humans could muster — and leaving behind only the dazed and the dying. They left; the survivors only worried about when they'd be back.

Until they found out they had bigger problems.

Darvin had taken five steps into safety before he realized it. One foot wavering in the air, he stared incredulously down at homely dirt. Dirt! He whirled so fast that only the frantic windmilling of his free arm kept him upright.

Behind him were four prints that were damper darknesses on dirt, before the magenta blades began, in a ruler's-edge straight line.

Gratefully he collapsed to his knees, laid his burden down, unwrapping it to the fecund violet sky. With a huge sigh, he lay down beside it. A slight breeze tickled his naked skin, and his whole body tasted the delicate indigo animacules it contained. He rolled over, and his breasts, painfully engorged with unejaculated milk, protested the pressure of the soft ground. *Later,* he thought.

He was still a dead man, and knew it. Death had only been postponed. But he would fight, fight to the last second, fight for every second — die fighting....

"Skinner, all right," the captain of the purification-class spaceship *Grim Reaper* announced. Not that there was any doubt. The Skinners had left their usual signature painfully visible even from orbit. The flat-skinned planet (razed?) was gridded with the thin magenta lines that were the Skinner version of Thou-Shalt-Not-Pass.

"I knew a human who committed suicide in an Alcatraz belt once," Stash — Life Sciences Officer Anastacia O'Malley-Jones IV/2 — murmured to her assistant, Finito (Finny) Massamba-Quaiti III/17. Both were on watch, comfortably settled in their Siamese-twinned work console/lounges, eyes fixed on screen and controls, the direct mind inputs plugged into the sockets above their ears. But despite the dozens of probes and instruments already launched and heading down to the planet, only the most preliminary data was starting to come back, and it only took a fraction of their attention to monitor the almost automatic analyzing.

"In Alcatraz? Yuck!" Instinctively, he ordered the screen to switch to a unit overflying an Alcatraz belt. Even at that height, the magenta plain filled the width of the screen. "You *sure*?"

"Yup. Found his suit, neatly folded, at the edge of the Alcatraz, with a suicide note

recorded in the aux databanks. He'd been gone so long even his footprints had disappeared. But we found the body later — luck, considering it was Alcatraz. Cellprints matched, no trace of drugs, no sign of trauma, except for what the Alcatraz itself did, of course." She sighed. "The Old Man ordered a complete post mort to be sure. Fun chore. Alcatraz. What kind of ghoul-minds designed that stuff, anyhow. Vampire-grass. Not too bad as long as you keep moving, but whenever you have to stop — the Death of a Thousand Cuts. Dying by millimeters...."

He would have shrugged if he hadn't been fitted so closely in place; that question, and all the others, had been asked so many times. "Who knows why the Skinners did any of what they did," he said, as had so many before him. Skinner-legacy worlds had been found, but no Skinners; by their works shall ye know them. Then, "Say, Stash, have you ever thought — we've seen the tricks that Skinners can play with DNA, even human DNA...do you suppose — couldn't they — I mean, could we have Skinner spies among us?"

She grinned and sighed at the same time. Duplication had its disadvantages as well as its advantages. Being able to make an atom-by-atom record of an individual, including the incredibly complex molecules that formed mind and memory, and being able to reproduce that record to make one — or a dozen — exact duplicates; good. But the records could be stored as well as used immediately. And when months — or years — elapsed (for any number of good reasons) between the recording and the making of the duplicate(s), no briefing could catch the "new" duplicate up on all details. "Relax, Finny, the Top Brass came up with that long time ago. Haven't you ever wondered why there's so much redundancy at key points, why there's such a large crew on this ship, when three or four could handle everything?"

"Uhhhh — I thought — companionship."

"Well, that, too. But mostly to guard against saboteurs. I tell you three times — and all three had better match! Any spy that made it past our machines would have to *act* like a human being, too — one hundred per cent of the time. Look, Finny, if it looks human, and tastes human, and has to act human, what harm can it do? Compared to what they've already done?"

Darvin sighed and woke. *Hungry!* Even the brisk food-laden air couldn't put a dent in that ravening compulsion. He had to have food *NOW!*

At least he was rested. He drew the baby toward him, slapped it to bring it out of dormancy, and placed it against his aching left breast. Immediately the engorgement pain was relieved, as the voracious infant sucked away.

But what would he do when the child drained him, and he had no more reserves to make milk with? He looked down at his pathetic gauntness and the baby's lack of development and sighed. When he had fled, he hadn't thought about after, just about foiling the death sentence. Which he had. But maybe it would have been better for both of them if he'd just given up and laid down in the sucker grass, let it drain energy and flesh and life from both him and the child.

His child, Mordag's child. All that was left of Mordag, now.

He knew, even if all conditions were favorable, that one alone could not make enough milk to feed a baby. But he would try. As long as he still breathed — legend claimed that on the other side of the death-belts were lands ravaged by monsters — he would try.

But now he needed food for himself. Flesh food. His skin seemed to rattle against his bare bones. He had to have a kill.

He rose and trotted along, the child, still greedily draining his breast, held in a simple sling. As he moved, his eyes searched alertly for signs, for spoor, droppings, any sign of possible prey. His nostrils spread wide, sniffing for the delicate scent of mobile, edible flesh.

The land looked much as his own, the only real Land, did; dirt, pebbles, here and there a spire of flint or other rock, a dip filled with mud or clay. The occasional bushes were the same, too.

He plucked some leaves of a bitterbush he passed, and put them in his mouth and chewed. Some people believed that chewing bitterbush gave you energy. Darvin suspected that the mouth-puckering taste — he knew better than to actually swallow the leaves themselves — simply distracted you from the body compulsion of FIND FOOD! The animacule-laden air teased around him, coconut and bright olive, grains of sugar for a starving man, sweetness being absorbed (oh, so slowly!) by his skin. A person could live a long, long time on foodair alone — if his body wasn't trying to make milk, if he wasn't half starved to begin with.

If he sat and rested quietly, instead of hunting feverishly.

He would live — the child would not. The whole frantic flight for nothing. Without food, he couldn't make milk. Without milk, the child would go dormant. But even a dormant baby wouldn't last long on only food-air. A baby needed milk, lots of milk. And he needed to eat food, much food, before he could make more milk.

He could almost see his prey, a fat zeeper, wobbling along, grazing on bitterbush, quickdeath, fastrot, slowpain, the saliva in its mouth transforming all to harmlessness, its body swollen with rich, juicy fat, its thick legs too clumsy to outrun a desperate man with a baby to make milk for.

A zeeper, a fivefanger — anything.

He had to hunt, hunt successfully, or the child would die.

And he did not want the baby, Mordag's baby, to die.

Darvin froze, then sprinted forward, mouth filling with saliva, eyes glazing in anticipation. He smelled zeeper, juicy, life-saving zeeper. Thick smell — *big* zeeper. And close.

He could see the track of it now, round depressions in the dirt, stripped branches, dung droppings. He jogged toward the smell, the baby bouncing against his breast. Soon, baby, he crooned. Soon...

A rock outcrop barred him from the delicious smell. Not high, but scattered out over several hectares. Rocks ocher and brick, grey and dirty cream. Mostly small rocks, but stacked high here and there, piled up and knocked down. A giant child's playground, a labyrinth of rock.

And somewhere within, cowering in fear or oblivious in an eating stupor, was his prey, his zeeper — his child's life.

He clambered up a talus slope, up a staircase of heaped high rock. Squinting, he strained his eyes. There, in that shadow, a faintest hint of movement. *That* way.

He jumped down, began running, leaping low rocks, tearing around high barriers. If he lost this zeeper...but he wasn't going to lose it. He could smell it; almost taste it. The baby jounced against his breast, a constant reminder. The zeeper was *close*. It was —

Surrounded by monsters.

The legends had been right. Here there be monsters. They turned as he rounded a spear of rock, and a hand of heads — more — faced him. Humanlike monsters, skins a brilliant mulberry color, meat and zeeper juices dribbling down their faces. His zeeper, His life. His baby.

He was dead and eaten. But he swung himself back around the rock spear and pelted back in the direction he'd come from, despair heavy on his shoulders, sheer terror lending him spurious energy.

Nobody had ever figured out a way to make environment protection suits that were less than hot, sticky, and uncomfortable. Stash rubbed her hip irritably against the smooth inner surface of her suit, and cursed softly to herself.

Finito was muttering, too; probably working on a *kinta*-game strategy, she thought, when he should have been concentrating on duty. "Heads up, Finny, we ought to be close to those lifescreen blips."

"Hope they're better than the last batch."

"Manufactured, all right. Nothing ever evolved that helpless naturally. Food animals, pure and simple."

"Ugh. It makes me sick just to look at them. Who could put those...."

"Hungry enough, and you'll eat anything. I — *Buddha!*"

Silence over the communicators, then, except for gasping breathing and what sounded, to the listeners in the *Grim Reaper* above, like someone throwing up.

But Stash had reacted quickly. The pursuing mulberry colored "humanoids" (if you stretched the term — hard — in Stash's opinion) went down en masse thanks to a skillfully lobbed trank grenade.

Their kelly green prey turned his head at the multiple thump, saw what the grenade had done, and redoubled his efforts. Stash and Finito didn't know if it was the fall of his erstwhile pursuers or their own outlandish — to him — environment-suited figures that provided the goad; either way, his feet were a blur.

"I'll get him," Finito offered, spitting to clear his mouth of its sour taste.

But Stash was already on her way. "My legs are longer."

It wasn't a fair race.

All Darvin had left was desperation.

Stash was fresh, well-fed, and had the exomuscles in her suit. Also a generous supply of trank grenades and a trank pistol. Finito cheered her on, trying to avoid looking at the mulberry colored horrors collapsing like so many beach balls with some of their air let out.

Then she reached a relatively clear patch, and could get a clean shot with the trank pistol. The kelly green humanoid went down, falling oddly, as though it sensed it was going to fall, and was trying to protect whatever it was carrying.

"Are those specimens typical?" The captain couldn't quite maintain official calm.

"I think so." Stash, a Life Sciences Officer, was more fascinated than repulsed. "We planted Spies in a couple of dozen squares inside the grid, selected at random. All the relays show beings similar to our friends here. At least, we've seen no signs of additional modifications."

"Additional..." The captain shook her head. "What *were* they doing?"

Stash shrugged. "I'll tell you this. I think our green friend was out of his square."

"You think he crossed the Alcatraz? Impossible!"

"Each square we've examined has specimens of a single color. All the others from the square we took him out of are that dull off-purple. But, the next square over has green. And, his feet show damage. Just what you'd expect of someone walking barefoot through Alcatraz, if that someone had thick callus layer built up from habitually going barefoot."

"Humph."

"It'd explain why the others are all so much bigger than he is. If he had been their size before starting across the Alcatraz...that hugeness is from a physiological analog of fat, readily, even preferentially deposited during digestion in the body, where it becomes a totally usable, instantly available source of energy. The trouble is, my calculations show that given the most favorable rate of utilization, he still shouldn't have made it – unless he was vastly *bigger.*"

"They certainly eat enough!" The captain was disgusted.

"Even through their skins. And that's odd, too..."

"Have you a recommendation yet?"

"I don't think they'll ever breed back."

"A Wipe, then."

"I...don't know. On these last few worlds, I've thought...Just a hunch, but there almost seems to be – just out of reach – a pattern."

"*Humph.*"

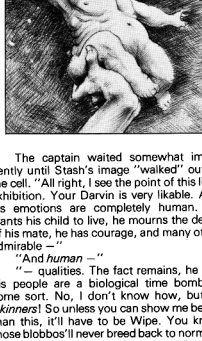
"They're human beings. Under all those Alterations, they're..."

"Monsters. Honest aliens are better than those obscene..." The captain marched away, and Stash knew what the sentence would be, for this world of Skinner-altered descendents of homo sapiens. Wipe. She stared at the one-way screen, showing Darvin sprawled on the floor, holding the baby to his breast with one hand, shoveling crumbled space rations into his mouth with the other.

"Stash, that is utterly..."

Stash herself was reclining on a work lounge, but the relay screen showed her holo image, machine generated, in the cell "talking" with Darvin. But – not exactly her image. She'd programmed a few changes in the holo; "her" image was now kelly-green and even larger than the mulberry humanoids; Stash plus. If her image had been real, it would have weighed at least six or eight times what Stash herself did.

She pulled the subvocal microphone away from her throat long enough to say, "But it worked. Now, listen and watch, until I'm through."



The captain waited somewhat impatiently until Stash's image "walked" out of the cell. "All right, I see the point of this little exhibition. Your Darvin is very likable. And his emotions are completely human. He wants his child to live, he mourns the death of his mate, he has courage, and many other admirable –"

"And *human* –"

"– qualities. The fact remains, he and his people are a biological time bomb of some sort. No, I don't know how, but – *Skinners*! So unless you can show me better than this, it'll have to be Wipe. You know those blobbos'll never breed back to norm."

"Is it his nursing the child that disgusts you?"

"No, that's an advantage. Or – it should be, except that it takes two. Dumb. That baby's surviving now, according to your report, because you were able to synthesize an analog to the male's milk. But it doesn't make sense. There were bound to be circumstances where only one parent was available. Why..."

Stash shook her head. "I don't know. *Skinners.* But, I admire Darvin. He's got guts. How many of us would just have curled up and let the Alcatraz eat us? How many of us would have tried such a desperate escape in the first place? He wasn't in any danger, you know. It was the baby. By his customs, the baby should have been killed when Mordag died. Mercy killing, in a sense, quick, easy death instead of slow starvation. Darvin risked himself, risked what seemed certain death, for the child, to give the child a chance. How many so-called humans..."

"Admirable, yes. But also deadly. To norms."

After the captain had returned to the control zone, Stash muttered. "Norm humans, norm humans. Is being human what we are – or what we do..."

"Stash's spending an awful lot of time with that abo."

"Her job." A shrug.

"Yes, but..."

"Darvin, tell me again about the scents you take in through your skin."

"Provider, your language has not the words. But I will try."

"When the foodair glows golden and teases around our bodies like..."

"I know you can't sing it except at the proper time, but tell me again how the Hillsong praises life."

"Hillsong is life, life is Hillsong. Life was, life is, life will be. Unity. Hillsong."

"Tell me..."

"The song of Foodair begins, In the days when men ate not, but drank the air all gold..."

Tell me...tell me...tell me...

"I don't like it. Stash's obsessed. And no way will the captain go for Quarantine instead of Wipe."

"It happens. She'll get over it."

"Just lie still for a little, Darvin, until I tell you can get back up."

"Yes, Provider. But – why is?"

"Never you mind, Darvin, never you mind. You wouldn't understand, but someday, there'll be a new world, a better world. You'll like playing Adam, won't you, Darvin? Especially if you have some good Eves, too."

"If you say so, Provider."

Stash was only one of many gathering data, feeding it into the central memory banks. Like her crewmates, Stash tried to keep up with as much of the others' inputs as possible, because you never knew what might affect your work. Until one watch, when she screamed hysterically, then curled up in a fiercely sobbing ball, half in, half out of the mind/machine interface.

The other crewmembers stasised their experiments and computations and rallied around. Someone flicked her input to OFF, the rest patted her heaving shoulders, murmured, and generally got in each others' way.

Finally her incoherent mumbling coelesced into words. "*Hillsong...*"

"You got a chance to scan that, did you?" Ivan was the ethnologist. "Bit strong, isn't it."

"Hillsong...they *ate*..."

"Ritual cannibalism," Ivan explained to the others. "Not uncommon in primitive cultures. Usually there's a religious rationalization, preserving the *mana* or what not; but they're really conserving the group's physical resources, closing the cycle more efficiently, so to speak."

"Hillsong...he loved...Mordag...but ...I thought....he kept saying...he *sang*..."

"Stash," Ivan was stern, "you know better than that. If the culture accepts, then so will he. The highest act of love..."

"He — *he sang Hillsong over Mordag!*"

"Of course. Imbedded in their culture. Hillsong. Ritual dismemberment and ingestion. It's so basic to them I thought a physical necessity might be involved. That's why I tagged it for you to look at."

"Hillsong..." Blind eyes stared. "All by himself...he *ate* Mordag..."

"Part of the cultural matrix. It's a group ritual."

"No. Alone." High thin laughter. "That's how he had the reserves to cross the Alcatraz. From Mordag. He loved Mordag and he *ate*..."

"Get hold of yourself," the captain had lost patience. "You have duties to carry out."

"I'll need...new specimens. I vaporized...horrible...*horrible*..."

"Well," the captain shrugged, "we're going to Wipe them before we leave, anyway."

Finito was a little embarrassed, visiting a failed crewmate. Not officially failed, of course; but everybody knew what "recuperative" transfer to a permanent duty station meant.

At first he thought his codekey had somehow miscued him to the wrong office. The graceful figure in the subdued pastel holo-suit was so unlike the flamboyant Stash aboard the *Grim Reaper.*

He made bumbling small talk, anything he could think of that wouldn't remind her, until she put him out of his misery.

"You can talk about that, Finny. I'm cured now."

"Oh. Ah. Yes." His arms and legs seemed too long, he wasn't sure what do to with them. Like many others, he had been duped off a young and only partially trained original, the theory being that such could learn new techniques easier than someone who had been trained in an outdated fashion, who'd have to unlearn before learning.

"Truth. In fact, my work here is based on that last voyage of mine. Would you like to see it?"

"Yes. I mean, of course. Tell me all about it."

"Come on, it's only down this corridor." It was like any corridor in any station, crammed with doors, cross-corridors, inputs, comms, graffiti.

"You know..." there was a difference in her voice, and he struggled to pin it down. Not sadness, exacty. "...how we were always wondering about the Skinners, *why* they did what they did, I mean."

He nodded.

"Well, I don't know why, but I think I know what they were trying to do. And I convinced enough Stripers that I was right and I was given this experimental facility to work with. That last world, where the Skinner alterations ate the air — and each other; that was the final clue, the piece that made the pattern clear. I saw what the purpose was then."

Skeptical. "Sure."

"It may be a test, or just a way of removing pests by transforming them into something useful. I don't know the why, just the what. Look, Finny, you ever read any Neo-Malthusian — never mind. You have any idea how many dupes the service produces every year? What our total population is, how fast the civvie worlds are increasing, what the projections are for the next couple of centuries? Well...it's scary. Because humans are limited to planets within a comparatively narrow environmental range, or to artificial stations like this, that take horrific energy and resources to build."

"So? We'll find more planets, or adapt. Whatever it takes."

"Play with ourselves, the way the Skinners did?" She said it softly, and he knew what it was he'd been searching for in her voice: maturity.

"If we did it to our own, it'd be for good reasons. The Skinners were nothing but evil."

"Like Darvin was evil for eating Mordag, who would have been eaten anyway? If you chop somebody's arm off, that's evil, isn't it? Unless you know the arm's incurably diseased, and the person'll die unless it comes off." She shook her head. " Motive. Results. We can only do the best we can with what we have, and hope. Finny, do you know what the Skinner alterations were for?"

HE SHRUGGED. "For? They had no purpose, they were just senseless experimenting. Playing. Not survival, because on most of the Skinner worlds, a norm human could survive fairly easily."

"Not senseless. There was a reason. And very much a survival reason. The Skinners were adapting humanity to *space*."

"What — impossible!"

"So was traveling faster than light, once. The Skinners didn't finish their work, but that was the pattern I saw. Something, in every alteration, was a pointer to surviving in raw space. A more effective way of protecting against vacuum, a change in energy utilization, whatever. Remember how, on that last world, the captain kept worrying about why it took two parents to nurture a child. Well, homo spaciens would tend toward solitariness. But with a powerful parenting urge, and the necessity for two parents to take care of and feed the resulting offspring — well, you have the basis for strong bonding, between the parents, between the parents and child.

"Many of the alterations had a rationale like that, if you only knew to look for it. And could find it, buried, camouflaged under the other alterations. Even if you added them all up, they wouldn't produce homo spaciens. But if you added them up and took them to their natural limits...." They had reached what looked like a dead end. She flicked a control, and the "blank" wall lit up, a 3-D holo screen.

"That...that's the abo you vaporized."

"Not quite. That's a dupe. I duplicated him, and the child, and some of the others. And I...."

"That's illegal!"

"I know." A soft smile. "Luckily, during my — breakdown, I wasn't allowed near any of the controls, or I'd've erased him from the memory banks. And that would have been a pity, because the captain Wiped his world. And Darvin and his people were...." One of the figures drifted up and waved.

"It's two-way!"

"Yes. Darvin's gotten used to me, as I really am. And he understands. I told him — everything — and he accepts the changes I made in him."

"You — changed...."

"Easily. He was only a file of data in a memory, after all. I reprogrammed some of his data, finished what the Skinners started. Homo spaciens. Absorbs energy from the surrounding medium, eats anything, space dust — anything. He's not ready for raw space yet, I'm still experimenting. But his sons — or his later dupes — I'm still learning. I'm...."

"That's you in there." He backed away from the screen, pointing a trembling finger. "That's you! You!"

"Of course, Finny. Would you like to be a homo spaciens yourself — one of your dupes, that is. Sail through space, dip in the organic clouds that swathe the gas giants, drift around a sun until you're bored with it, and then form a spore around yourself, and wake a thousand, two thousand years later, when light pressure has carried you within reach of another sun. Homo spaciens isn't immortal, but he's pretty close. How about it, crewmate?"

"Not me!" He continued to back away.

But she had forgotten him, staring into her environment tank, watching the floating bodies. "Good ol' homo sap," she murmured. "Stubborn. Never do what an alien told us. Maybe not if our own leaders told us. But, to spite an enemy? Show we could go them one better? How well did they know us? Was this coincidence, a test we had to pass — maybe something that would prove how dangerous we really are. No matter. We've gone too far to stop now."

"You...this experiment ought to be scrubbed. Wiped." But it was already too late, and something in him knew it. And in his mind, an organic relay he wasn't aware of closed; and somewhere very far away, an alien entity emitted the alien equivalent of a satisfied chuckle, and moved the alien equivalent of a thick file from one classification to another.!

"Too late, Finny," she confirmed his fears. "But think, crewmate. We were so vulnerable. To the Skinners, to someone worse, to our own weaknesses, our lack of control." She waved again into the tank, and shut the screen off. "But when the inevitable catastrophe comes, they'll be safe, my altered dupes, and Darvin's, and the many, many others. Safe, drifting through space, sailing through infinity, homo spaciens...." Her smile held all the glory of space itself. "No more Hillsongs, Finny. Never again. Only Starsongs, from now on." ■■

Science for Science Fiction

Edited by John Boardman, Ph.D.

The Lilliputian Sun

Is the Sun shrinking? Recently a British astronomer, Jack Eddy, claimed that measurements taken at Greenwich Observatory from 1836 to 1950 indicated that the diameter of the solar disk has been shrinking by 0.1% per century. If such a rate of shrinkage were to go on for 100,000 years — a minute fragment of the Sun's total age — then it would vanish utterly! Eddy didn't suggest any such catastrophe; presumably the Sun is pulsating in a cycle of long duration. As further evidence, Eddy cited an eclipse observation made on 9 April 1567 by Christoph Schluessel, who was then the Papal Astronomer under the Latinized version of his name, Clavius. (He also designed the calendar system which we today call "Gregorian" after the pope who took the credit for the job.) This solar eclipse should have been observed as total; however, Schluessel saw the Sun's disk as extending beyond the Moon's shadow on all sides, producing instead the type of eclipse which is called "annular."

However, things may not be this serious after all. In the 3½ centuries of systematic telescopic observation of the planets, several transits of Mercury across the solar disk have been observed. The observations have been quite precise, because until the development of modern radar methods they were almost the only way of accurately measuring the distance from the Earth to the Sun. And a survey of the results shows no significant change in the apparent size of the solar disk.

Eddy's figures are apparently a result of the fact that the period which he used for his calculations was the period in which soft coal consumption increased greatly. Coal particles in the atmosphere changed its optical properties slightly, and the apparent shrinkage of the Sun's diameter was one of the effects of this. This same pollution of the atmosphere, and the bright lights of London, caused the observatory itself to be moved to Herstmonceux Castle in Sussex in 1958.

Sky & Telescope, July 1980

Energetic Debate

Uranium: Energy Source of the Future? by Sir Ernest Titterton and F.P.J. Robotham, discusses a controversy that is dividing public opinion in Australia but has been given very little attention in the rest of the world. Australia seems to possess about one sixth of the world's uranium, but there is a serious agitation against mining it in any quantity and for any purpose whatsoever. The book is a dialog in which Titterton defends uranium mining and Robotham attacks it. The tone taken by the two men, as much as their arguments, is a microcosm of the whole controversy over nuclear power. According to Jim Daglish's review in *New Scientist*, Titterton points out that "the production of electricity from nuclear power is the cheapest, cleanest, and safest means of power production yet devised by man, causing no more radiation damage and far less environmental damage than the corresponding industry based on the burning of coal." Figures are provided in support of this contention. Robotham, on the other hand, says, "If Australia kept her uranium underground, she would give a tremendous boost to the worldwide anti-nuclear movement and, more importantly, deliver a virtual knock-out blow to the already punchdrunk nuclear industry... Instead of relying on all too fallible scientists and imperfect technology, wouldn't it be much easier to have a pure heart?"

New Scientist, 3 Jan. 1980

The Newest Asteroid

Fifty years ago the planet Pluto was discovered, culminating eighty years of effort at trying to find the object whose gravitational attraction was perturbing the orbits of Neptune and Uranus. Now, however, it appears that Pluto is too small to have had the observed effects on those much larger planets, and the "Ninth Planet" may have to be demoted to the status of a large double asteroid.

Two years ago a satellite of Pluto was discovered, making possible much more accurate measurement of the planet's mass. The mass of Pluto turns out to be only about 0.23% that of Earth, making it smaller than seven of the solar system's moons including our own. Charon, the satellite, is about one tenth the mass of Pluto, creating by far the largest ratio of satellite mass to planet mass in the entire solar system. (In second place is the Moon-Earth mass ratio, 0.0123.)

Most of the solar system's asteroids have orbits between those of Mars and Jupiter, though they are by no means so thick as to provide the hazard to space navigation implied in *The Empire Strikes Back*. But a few do go further out. The first of these to be discovered was Hidalgo, which can go almost as far out as Saturn. In 1978, Chiron was discovered, whose orbit lies between those of Saturn and Uranus. (Chiron, named for the boss centaur, is not to be confused with Charon, proprietor of the well-known Stygian ferryboat.)

It may be that asteroids are not particularly limited to the well-known "asteroid belt," but are common further out — so far that only the largest ones such as Pluto and Chiron have thus far been discovered. If this is so, then Pluto is the largest asteroid, while Chiron is comparable in size with Ceres, largest of the asteroids between Mars and Jupiter. Charon is about the same size as Ceres or Chiron.

Sky & Telescope, June 1980

Outside Curve

The curve ball was introduced to baseball in the 1890's, and at the time it caused a great deal of controversy. Some people claimed that the ball didn't really curve, that its apparent path was an optical illusion. Eventually one manager had a line of posts set up between the pitcher's mound and the plate, and showed that his prize curve ball pitcher could indeed throw a pitch that went around the stakes.

Recently some sports columnists have seen fit to revive this argument, and even claim that some scientists still think the curve ball is an illusion. Yet the physical principle behind the curve ball was discovered long before baseball itself was developed. In the 18th century Daniel Bernoulli, a Swiss physicist, discovered the basic idea. As a rotating ball travels through the air, the air pressure is greater on the side of the ball that is turning away from the direction of travel, and this forces the ball to one side as it moves. A similar situation causes air pressure to be lower above the wing of an airplane than below, thus applying a lift to the wing.

Wasp Power

Of course, the lift on a wing isn't effective until the aircraft is already traveling at a speed sufficient to get the air flow started. This is true even if the "aircraft" is an insect. Most insects oscillate their wings upon takeoff, to provide the lift. This, however, has its hazards too. As the vortices produced by the oscillation roll off the trailing edges of their wings, they actually retard the lift-off.

The chalcid wasps seem to have found a solution for this. High-speed photography has demonstrated that they oscillate their wings so that each provides an air vortex that lifts the other.

New Scientist, 10 Jan. 80

Chinese Astronomy

For many centuries, detailed records of planetary conjunctions and strange appearances in the heavens were kept at the Chinese court. Scholars debated the astrological significance of these happenings, and kept records so that future monarchs could be guided. Astrology never made much headway in the regions dominated by Judaism and its daughter religions Christianity and Islam, probably out of the Jewish conviction that the stars do not govern but are governed. However, in China most emperors patronized astrology. The records thus assembled have proven a fruitful source of information about novas and supernovas (exploding stars) now that they have been made available to western astronomers through the efforts of Shigeru Kenda and Ho Peng Yoke.

It is, of course, necessary to check the accuracy of the ancient records. Novas were not commonly observed by European astronomers of the ancient and medieval periods, so their records do not provide an adequate check. However, the extremely regular movements of the planets mean that computers can be used to establish the precise date of, say, a conjunction of Mars and Saturn. Then the computer-derived date can be checked against the ancient Chinese record, giving an idea of how accurately the Chinese recorded their observations.

This check had, as a by-product, a most interesting result. Since astrology was so important to the ancient Chinese, sometimes horoscopes were forged for political purposes. Sometimes a Chinese emperor would

arise who objected to this sort of thing. The British astronomers David H. Clark and F. Richard Stephenson, in their book *The Historical Supernovae,* tartly observe: "Certain emperors were opposed to astrology and divination, e.g. Wu-ti, who in AD 268 passed an edict to ban the study of these subjects, and Yang-ti, who about AD 610 ordered all books dealing with these subjects to be burned. However, and fortunately for modern science, these enlightened rulers were in the minority."

Heady Stuff

During the last years of World War II, the Reichswehr tried to eke out its scanty supplies of gasoline by mixing it with ethyl alcohol, distilled from locally grown grain. After the war, students at the University of Muenster got hold of some of this gasohol and, since there was nothing else alcoholic available, they distilled out the petroleum fragments *very* carefully and used the alcohol for convivial purposes. It proved perfectly drinkable, but afterwards the toper smelled like an old Ford.

Recently, Germany once again began to experiment with a gasoline-alcohol mixture. Called "M-15" because it is 15% alcohol, it is now on sale at 30 filling stations in the German Federal Republic and West Berlin. Many automobiles are now being modified to accommodate this fuel. And, presumably to prevent such use of the product as took place in Muenster, the alcoholic component is methanol — the fatal "wood alcohol" that claimed so many lives during America's experiment in prohibition.

New Scientist, 3 Jan. 1980

Seasons Greetings

Scientists are supposed to be grimly unsentimental people, so it may come as a surprise that some scientific institutions send out Christmas cards. Of course, there is a bit of variance from other people's practices. Since Sir Isaac Newton was born on 25 December 1642, the Central Research Group in Ithaca, New York, sent out last year "Newtonmas" cards. In England, the Asbestos Information Centre sent out cards that had been printed to raise money for the Imperial Cancer Research Fund.

New Scientist, 10 Jan. 1980

The Trouble with Venus

Now, and until January 1981, Venus is appearing as a brilliant morning star. Late-night revelers, weaving their way home in the dawn hours, will see a clear white light in the east, and if some of them attribute the weaving to the planet rather than to themselves, we may get another spate of "flying saucer" reports. These reports always go up in quantity when Venus is prominent in the sky.

The chief character in Giuseppe di Lampedusa's novel *The Leopard* is, like Lampedusa himself, a Sicilian aristocrat. He is also an amateur astronomer. After a ball which constitutes one of the pivotal scenes of the novel, the Prince is on his way home just before dawn. Upset by the island's political turmoil, he takes comfort in the clear light of Venus — seen in the west! As a morning star, Venus rises just before the Sun, naturally in the east.

Lampedusa erred in good company. Shakespeare made a similar mistake in *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* The wedding of "Duke Theseus of Athens," in the last scene, is scheduled for the time of the new moon. Yet the rustics who are rehearsing a play for the festivities consult an almanac, to find that there will be a moon on the night of the revels. Actually, at new moon the Moon rises and sets with the Sun, and is not visible in the sky.

Maxwell and Company

James Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879) is generally recognized to have been the greatest physicist between Newton and Einstein. His electromagnetic theory wrapped up in one general explanation all the phenomena of electricity, magnetism, and light which had puzzled scientists for centuries. A century after his death, yet another distinction is his. He is the only man on the planet Venus.

Recently an international conference of astronomers adopted a general plan for naming surface features on other planets. By this plan, the surface features of Venus were to be named after female personages. Yet, by the time this plan was adopted, the Maxwell Mountains had already been named. So he shares that planet with features named after the goddesses Lakshmi, Rhea, Aphrodite, Freyja, and Ishtar, and after the only two mortal women thus far honored — an odd assortment consisting of the poet Sappho and the nuclear physicist Lise Meitner.

Sky & Telescope, June 1980

Disaster in the Urals

For several years the exiled Soviet scientist Zhores Medvedev has claimed that a disaster of large proportions took place at a Soviet nuclear installation in the Ural Mountains in the winter of 1957-58. Studies undertaken at Oak Ridge now seem to indicate that some such disaster did indeed happen.

The indications come from several different sources, and illustrate the importance of putting together apparently minor and unconnected bits of information to get a complete picture. Since 1958, the names of 30 villages have been eliminated from maps in the region east and south of Kyshtyn. (The villages were probably evacuated rather than demolished by an explosion.) Two large reservoirs have been built on the Techa River downstream from Lake Kyzyltash, despite the fact that there are already numerous lakes in the region. Water that would have drained into Lake Kyzyltash has instead been diverted into these reservoirs. Fisheries records indicate that several lakes in the vicinity have not been stocked since 1958.

The disaster was almost certainly not a nuclear explosion, or widespread contamination by radioactive materials. At the time, cesium 137 was extracted from wastes by a process that required large quantities of ammonium nitrate. (This process is now obsolete.) Ammonium nitrate is, if treated carelessly, a powerful explosive, and scientific safety standards in the Soviet Union are notoriously far below American standards.

New Scientist, 10 Jan. 1980

Shifty Eyes

In his anti-scientific satire *The Clouds,* the ancient Greek playwright Aristophanes showed a philosopher peering down into a well to study the secrets of the Earth, while "his rump is studying astronomy on its own account." But the sciences of astronomy and geology are more closely related to each other than this scene admits. Fremont Peak in California is a popular place for amateur astronomers to take their equipment. On the night of 12 April 1980, several amateurs were up there, when an earthquake struck. Since the quake was centered on the mountain, the effects were quite considerable. After the dozen or so aftershocks had passed, one of the astronomers found that the mounting of his 20-cm. telescope had been moved two degrees away from the north.

Two radiotelescopes at Pasadena and Goldstone were also affected by California's lively terrain. They have both been receiving bursts of energy from quasars, and their measurements indicate that over a period of seven months the separation of the observatories has increased by twenty centimeters.

Sky & Telescope, July 1980, and *New Scientist,* 10 Jan. 1980

Ion Generators

There has recently been a vogue for negative ion generators, which are alleged to make you feel better. Two years ago, a salesman for these devices had a booth at a science-fiction convention. He was asked what happens to the positive ions that must necessarily be produced if negative ions are put into the atmosphere. He replied that the negative ions were in the majority, since for every five negative charges produced, only four positive charges appeared.

If this statement is true, that more negative than positive charges can be produced, then several Nobel Prizes will have to be revoked. So all day, science fiction fans directed one another to his booth, to hear and guffaw at the salesman's pitch. He never did show up for the second and third days of the convention.

However, negative ion generators are still on the market, together with the claims made for them. And now it appears that they are capable of producing dangerous amounts of ozone. But, so far, there has been no intelligible scientific explanation of what if anything they do.

Maybe it is the ozone that does it, after all. The exhilirating feeling of an approaching thunderstorm is probably due to the ozone molecules that the electrical activity has made out of ordinary atmospheric oxygen molecules. If, as they claim, the manufacturers of negative ion generators are making them now so that they produce less ozone, they may be doing themseves out of their market.

New York Daily News, 16 July 1980



Facts for Fantasy

Edited by Susan Shwartz, Ph.D.

Tiamat and the Monsters

The Sumerians explain the creation of the world by saying that in the beginning were only Apsu, the ocean, and Tiamat, the sea. Their waters mingled and produced tumult, called Mummu, and then twin serpents, Lakhmu and Lakhamu, who gave birth to heaven and earth which, in turn, brought forth even more gods of the sky and underworld. But they were noisy gods and gave old Apsu no rest; he wanted to destroy them, though Tiamat protested. Apsu was finally taken prisoner by the younger gods. Tiamat decided she would tame the younger gods and brought forth serpents, dragons, savage dogs, and scorpion men; stirred up the hurricane; and went forth to battle, only to be slain by Bel-Marduk. After her death, Marduk created the heaven and earth for mortals (the previous creation had been restricted to the gods) from her body, and from the blood of her general, Kingu, was created mankind. It is thought that this creation myth provides the original of the Biblical Flood story and of Leviathan, one of the monsters of the deep mentioned in the Old and New Testaments.

Larousse Mythology, following *The Epic of the Creation*

Don't Go in the *Voda*

The Slavonic word *voda* means water — lakes, pools, streams, rivers, and millponds. In the mill-ponds, near the millwheels, the Vodyany-ye, the water spirits of the Slavonic people, were thought to gather. Some Vodyanoi had human faces but their eyes resembled hot coals. They had horns and, instead of hands, paws, and huge toes on their feet. Others of the Vodyanoi were gigantic and covered with grass and moss. Some were black with red eyes and noses the size of boots. Still others appeared like old men with green hair and beards — but their hair changed color when the moon waned. And others appeared in the guises of naked women combing their hair. Immortal, the Vodyanoi aged or became younger-seeming in accordance with the phases of the moon.

They hated humans, and like trolls, liked to lie in wait for them, to drag them into their gold and silver cities underwater to serve them as slaves. During the day, the Vodyanoi rested in their palaces; in the evening, they came out and splashed in the water. And after sunset, any swimmer could be seized. Especially hateful to the Vodyany-ye were mills, which they destroyed whenever they could.

Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology

By a Nail

In many primitive cultures, nail-parings are throught to hold power. Nowhere is this more explicit than in *Voluspa,* the song of the Old Norse sorceress or spae-wife who tells of Ragnarok, the Twilight of the Gods. After the Fimbulwinter which comes without a spring, Heimdall, the gate-keeper of Asgard, blows his horn to warn the gods. As the World-Ash trembles and the Fenris-wolf runs free, the ship *Naglfar,* captained by Loki, sails from the east.

In Old Norse, *Naglfar* means, literally, nail-parings. This ship which carries the giants and all the other children of darkness is built of the nail-parings of the dead. A long time in the building, its appearance spells the end of the world.

Voluspa and *The Elder Edda,* translated by Paul Taylor and W.H. Auden

Geryon

Geryon was one of the classical monsters — a three-headed creature destroyed by Hercules as one of his labors. However, in the Middle Ages, Dante Alighieri improved upon him in the *Inferno.* Instead of having three heads, Dante's Geryon had three natures: human, animal, and reptile. His face was that of a just and handsome man but his forepaws were shaggy. Though his scales were magnificently colored, his tail was tipped with a poisonous sting. He represented fraud and provided a way for Dante and Virgil, his guide, to descend from Violence into the Circle of Fraud.

Dante, *The Divine Comedy, Inferno,* Canto xvii

Sea Snare

Fastitocalon, meaning tortoise-shield, was what the Anglo-Saxons called the whale. He was a treacherous creature the color of uncut stone, they said; his habit was to wander in shallow waters near sandbars so that he resembled just one more island. Weary after a long voyage, seafarers could be deceived by the sleeping whale, and consequently they might moor their ships and disembark. Glad to be on land, the sailors would kindle bonfires and feast and relax. When the fires' heat woke the crafty whale, he would suddenly dive, drowning the unwary crew and taking their ship down with him.

The Exeter Book, edited by George Philip Krapp and Elliott Dooble, Columbia Univ. Press, 1936

Witches of the Sun

Before Jason would return to Greece in triumph with the Golden Fleece, he and Medea had to sail beyond Colchis, Medea's barbarous western homeland, to Aiaia, which originally meant only "the land." Aiaia, at the uttermost west, was Circe's kingdom; beyond it was ocean, and beyond that, the Underworld. Only two men ever sailed away from Circe's island — Odysseus and Jason. Odysseus, according to some stories, was killed in his old age by Telegonus, his son by Circe. Jason, however, was loved by Medea, Circe's niece and therefore the granddaughter of Helios, the Sun-god. So he wasn't subject, as was Odysseus, to a threat of transformation into a wild boar. Instead, Medea led him to her aunt's home and made him crouch by the hearthfire as a suppliant. Circe looked at the man and Medea out of eyes that had fire-glints in them and began a ritual to absolve Jason and Medea of kin-slaying, thus enabling them to return to Greece. But later killings made Medea hated in Jason's country, even by Jason. Three last times she struck at him in anger — killing Jason's promised bride, then her father, and finally her own children before escaping in a dragon-drawn chariot. Jason was later to die alone, crushed by the *Argo,* the great ship that had brought him fame, as he slept in the shadow of its rotten hulk.

Argonautica, Apollonius Rhodes

The Sampo

Blown offcourse to North Farm, a place that resembles the underworld, the Finnish hero Vainamoinen learns from Louki, mistress of North Farm, that the only way that he can earn his way home is by forging a Sampo. The Sampo, made from the feather of one swan, half a strand of hair, a single barleycorn, and the broken pieces of a distaff, looks like nothing more than a highly decorated lid, but its magical properties clearly require a mastersmith's craft.

Vainamoinen is no smith, he tells Louki, but his friend Ilmarinen is. Louki sends Vainmoinen home with a message for Ilmarinen that anyone who can forge a Sampo will be rewarded by her daughter, a beautiful but haughty girl who sits on the rainbow. Ilmarinen decides to go to North Farm and builds a smithy on bare rock, for forging the Sampo. After it is forged, Ilmarinen commands the winds to blow for three days while the Sampo is decorated. He labors by day and nightly attempts to woo Louki's daughter; unfortunately, he is a better smith than a suitor. The Sampo, when finished, begins to grind out food, things to eat, to sell, and to store, and Louki locks it in a copper mountain behind nine locks where it strikes down roots deep into the ground, the shore, and near the house. Ilmarinen fails to gain a bride and desires death. Louki sends him home instead.

The Kalevala, translated by Francis Magoun. Harvard University Press, 1969

Hero Alexander

Alexander, first prince of Novgorod, then Great Prince of Vladimir and all Russia, spent his life fighting the enemies of Russia on all fronts. During the thirteenth century when eastern Russia was overrun by the Mongols under Batu Khan, Alexander finally went to the Khan's Horde to establish (temporary) peace. In 1240, he defeated the Swedes at Neva, and in 1242 he fought against the Livonian Order of German Knights, meeting them in a great battle on the frozen Chud lake. The clanging of swords was so loud that men thought that the ice was breaking; it was so covered with blood that no one could see it. The Livonian order was routed, and Alexander returned

home in glory. Later in his life, as a son of the Greek Orthodox Church, he rejected the counsel of two Roman Catholic Cardinals. At his death, he took strict monastic vows and was later canonized.

During the Second World War, the Soviet government established a military medal in his name. About this time Sergei Eisenstein, the famous Russian director, made his film *Alexander Nevsky,* which, like the Olivier *Henry V,* inspired his country against the Germans by reminding people of the great warrior-kings.

Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales, **ed. Serge A. Zenkovsky. Dutton**

The Lion-heart and Excalibur

In gratitude to Tancred of Sicily for turning against Philip Augustus of France, Richard the Lion-hearted sealed an alliance with him by agreeing to betroth Tancred's baby daughter to his nephew, Arthur of Brittany (so-called to win Breton support). Moreover, he offered Tancred Excalibur, the sword of Arthur the King, which some of Henry II's archeological researches had allegedly uncovered at Glastonbury, which was thought to be the site of Avalon. Arthur of Brittany was designated as Richard's heir. However, Richard died in 1199 and Arthur shortly thereafter, around 1203, with as much mystery surrounding his death as had surrounded the legendary king's. No one knows what became of Excalibur.

Giraldus Cambrensis, Benedict of Peterborough, and Peter de Langtoft

Fireships

Before the Duke of Medina Sidonia sailed with the Spanish Armada to England, King Philip had many times warned him that the English were preparing strange and devilish inventions. Sidonia was especially concerned about hellburners — sailing ships made into enormous bombs, capable of turning everything within a mile's radius into burning rubble. These hellburners had supposedly been devised by the Italian inventor Giambelli, who was working in 1588 for Queen Elizabeth. What Sir Francis Drake's fleet of eight fireships actually contained were combustibles, sails, spars, and rigging. Each ship's guns were double-shotted, to explode when the burning ships made them hot enough. (Despite later bills by one shipowner to the Treasury for butter, beef, and biscuit, not many supplies were left aboard the ships destined to be burned.) When, around midnight of August 6, 1588, Medina Sidonia saw the eight tall, blazing ships in perfect formation sailing toward his Armada, he dispatched a screen of small pinnaces to push the fireships off course. While the Spanish did deflect two of the fireships, by the time they were ready to deal with the other six, the heated guns began to explode. These must be hellburners, the Spanish thought, and the Armada's ships scattered in confusion.

The Armada, **Garrett Mattingly, Houghton Mifflin, 1959**

The Cult of Luxury

Most of the cults of the middle ages were marked by hardship: people went on Crusades or, in bursts of masochistic fervor (perhaps induced by contaminated grain), they whipped themselves from town to town. A remarkable exception to this preoccupation with suffering for God's sake was the German Brethren of the Free Spirit. The mystic Heinrich Suso claimed that God had commanded him to throw away his whips and hair shirt and instead live in luxury, dress like a great noble, feast and drink, and be as promiscuous as he could. Impelled by this "vision," Suso created a cult in which salvation was indicated by a total lack of conscience. Free Spirits felt so united with God that they could not sin; some, in fact, felt that they had become God. This cult gained a large following and suffered incredible amounts of condemnation by chroniclers who claimed that when the Free Spirits were not dressing like nobles, they were running around naked and having orgies. Although by the end of the fourteenth century, some of the Brethren of the Free Spirits had been burned at the stake, people like the Brethren formed a similar cult-group called the Spiritual Libertines.

The Pursuit of the Millennium, **Norman Cohn, Paladin Books, England, 1970**

Viking Food and Shelter

The Norse poem *Rigsthula* describes the daily lives of the three classes of Vikings: thrall, freeman, and noble. Thralls performed unskilled labor; they carried burdens, fetched wood, spread dung, cared for the pigs, cattle, and goats. The freeman often worked as a ploughman, smith, or carpenter, while nobles engaged in weapons practice, swimming, riding, hunting, and warfare and had time for amusements like chess and verse making. Thralls ate meat broth and bran bread, freemen ate boiled veal, while nobles ate white bread, chicken, and game. Unlike the other classes, nobles drank wine, which was considered more of a luxury than the barley beer that Vikings brewed themselves. For all classes, the center of family life was the open hearth, which generally was placed in the middle of the floor. This hearth provided heat and light, though well-off Vikings might have oil lamps for extra illumination. Because most Viking houses consisted of one main room — or, in the case of noble houses, one hall — privacy was as scarce for Vikings as it was for almost everyone else but hermits in the Middle Ages.

Heraldic puns

Canting heraldry, or armorial devices that punned on their bearers' names (Arundel = hirondelle, or swallow), could be used during the Middle Ages for more than identification. One unfortunate pun cost a man his life. William Collyngbourne wrote a couplet:

"The cat, the rat, and Lovell our dog
Rule all England under a Hog."

Cat, rat, and dog referred to Catesby, Ratcliffe, and Lovell, Richard III's ministers; the hog referred unflatteringly to Richard himself, whose emblem was the Boar. Because this poem fell into a genre of heraldic prophecy in which a man's emblem stood for the man and could be manipulated to "foretell" events for the purposes of political propaganda, Richard III had Collingbourne executed.

The Robe

One of the finest and best-loved knights in either England or France during the reign of Edward III was Sir John Chandos. He fought at the battle of Crecy in 1346 in which 13,000 English, all but three thousand of them archers, routed 40,000 Frenchmen, and was made a Knight of the Garter three years later. Ultimately, Sir John was a victim of medieval fashion. Even over armor, fourteenth-century nobles wore long surcoats; Sir John's was blazoned with his arms — red and silver on white silk. As he walked into battle he stumbled on the frosty ground and his feet tangled in his long robe. A squire thrust at him with a lance but Sir John Chandos, blinded on one side five years earlier in a staghunt, did not see the lance coming at him and was hit between nose and forehead. Since he had not put down his visor, he was mortally wounded and died a day and a night later, mourned by both English and French.

Froissart's Chronicles

My Lady Shapeshifter

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Lusignan family was among the most powerful in Europe. Hugh, indeed, married John of England's widow. But how did the Lusignans gain their power? The story is told that Raimondin de Lusignan married a lady in return for her promise to make him the first nobleman of the realm. All he promised the Lady Melusine in return was that he never try to see her on Saturday. For on Saturdays, Melusine, who was a fairy, turned into a winged dragon. Naturally, when Raimondin de Lusignan's curiosity got the better of him, Melusine flew away from their chateau, never to return, except in rumor.

The *Tres Riches Heures* of Jean, Duc de Berry. George Braziller, 1969

Arthur's Seneschal

In the romances of Malory and T.H. White, Sir Kay is presented as Arthur's seneschal and a chronic complainer. He is, however, one of the earliest-mentioned of Arthur's knights. The *Mabinogion,* a collection of Welsh stories, describes Kay, or Cei, as it calls him, as having strange traits. He could stay under water for nine days and nine nights, and during that time, he didn't need to sleep. No physician could heal any man he wounded. If he wanted, he could be as tall as the towering trees and, because of his tremendous body heat, rain never fell on him. He, Gawain (called Gwalchmai) and Bedwyr (whom some writers claim is the original of Lancelot) are the earliest mentioned of Arthur's knights.

The Mabinogion, **translated by Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones. Everyman Edition**



FICTION

by David James Ritchie
ILLUSTRATION BY JOE JUSKO

A Combat from the Arena of Death

Eye of the Goblin

Kargash smiled. It took an effort. Here, beneath the arena, the harsh rays of the midday sun did not penetrate. But neither did the wind. The close, still air of the arming pen made breathing difficult. It stank of blood and waste and newly oiled weapons. And it stank of something else besides.

"Fear," Kargash chuckled. Fear of pain. Fear of maiming. Fear of death. The great, overmastering fear of the huge beast that had occupied the arming pen before Kargash. The beast whose fear was so strong that its scent lingered still. The beast whose agonized death screams could now be heard rising above the din of the crowd. Kargash felt an unaccountable urge to go to the far side of the pen and look up into the arena through the tiny grate in the portal. He wanted to see the end of the beast. To touch its pain. To understand its weakness.

The Great Goblin sighed. No, he thought. Not now. Not before. After, if there was time. Better now to husband strength. Better to gather the wandering mind. Today he must fight alone against the one they called Arn. Arn, Goblin-Slayer. Arn of the pale hair. He whose eyes were like the cave ice of Kargash's mountain home. A man-thing, yes. But not like other man-things. Almost as big as a Hobgoblin, almost as big as Kargash, himself. Strong and fast, he was. Deadly.

The Masters did not often pit lone Hobgoblins against the faster man-things. Usually, they would be two or three together. Usually, that was enough. But not today. Today, the Arn-thing would fight alone, but so would Kargash. There would be much blood. There always was. But today it would be different. Today, the red and the black would mix. A vision passed before the Goblin's eyes. It was a vision of his death.

Shaking himself from his reverie, Kargash quietly crossed his legs so that the great hairy feet rested on knobby knees. Grasping a foot in each horny hand, the Goblin began to clear his mind. Sweat beaded on his lumpy gray forehead and slithered down his seamed face to fall unnoticed from nose and chin to the damp sand below. Gradually, the bunched muscles of the Great Goblin's massive form began to unknot and smooth out. The drooping eyelids closed entirely. The retractable flesh around his mouth slackened to cover the sharp fighting teeth. Finally, the ragged sensation of Kargash's breath was replaced by a measured hissing. Completely at rest, he appeared not to be alive at all, but rather the polished, but imperfect, casting of some dark and bloody god from the days of the world's youth.

Kargash allowed his mind to drift. It was a pleasant sensation. There was a soft, cottony dampness over everything. It carried with it a scent of pine and birch and spruce. Gently, the Inner Eye opened over a rugged,



wooded valley beneath a shining mountain. A thread of rippling silver cut through dark blue stands of evergreens, catching the slanting rays of a dying sun. The Inner Eye recoiled, snapped tightly shut. The sun. The sun glinting off the ice pack that crowned the mountain was a physical hurt. It dazzled the Eye and benumbed the brain behind it.

CAUTIOUSLY, THE EYE AGAIN OPENED. This time the perspective was different. The Eye was sheltered now beneath a vaulting over-hang of cool limestone. Soaring pillars of spruce cut it off from the sun's brightness. Here, it was dark and cool. The all-absorbing bed of rotting pine needles softened the sounds of a nearby brook, the hissing of the wind in the branches of the trees. It was quiet, peaceful. The Eye was possessed by an overwhelming sense of rightness. It knew this place, this time. It was home. Home, at Nergil-hin. The Eye turned 90°. Before it was the shallow bowl of the Blood Cup, its ragged rim broken by great diabase boulders, its rough floor of rock and tree roots in almost even measure carpeted with spongy moss. The Eye closed.

When it again popped open, the steep sides of the Blood Cup were all around. The Eye seemed to hover half a dozen feet above the uneven floor of the place. Before it stood a figure. The figure was itself. No, not itself. Itself as it had been. Ten years before. Before ... the Masters.

The self before the Eye seemed strange. Too young, by far. The gray skin too smooth. The darkly flashing Hobgoblin eyes too open, their black wells not yet filled with visions of horror and pain. Instead the eyes bespoke the sin of youth, the inability to see the coming death that would make all dreams false. The young Hobgoblin stood in reverie before the red-rimmed Eye. The open wolf-skin vest exposed the hard flatness of hairless pectorals. The shining skin was not yet criss-crossed with the net of greenish scars the Eye knew now covered it. The muscular arms were strong, but did not bulge with the fighting muscles that would later develop. Here, standing in the sacred arena where issues were decided and quarrels ajudicated by the sword, the youth dreamed himself master of his tribe, wearer of the Golden Torque, speaker for the Wolfshead Lodge. Such dreams as youth have always dreamed, he dreamed.

"You are he?" The voice was familiar to the Eye, but not to the youth. The Hobgoblin turned to face the voice. The Eye already saw, already knew the voice of the Master. The sun behind the tossing branches of the trees cast a flickering aura around the figure standing on the lip of the Blood Cup. Eye and Hobgoblin were both bedazzled.

"I am he. You?"

"I am Aevrill. I am the Master."

The figure stepped from the rim into the bowl. It approached to within a few paces of the youth.

"Why do you wait here at the appointed time?" The ritual question.

"I seek to serve the Masters." The required answer.

"Will you serve faithfully?"

"I will."

"What seek you in return?"

"I seek the Golden Torque."

The figure smiled. It was unpleasant, the smile. Like the glimmering in the eye of the hawk before it kills. A grin that split the hatchet-face of the stranger and made his head more like a skull of some long-dead thing than that of a living man.

"You ask much, young Goblin. For such as you, the normal term will not serve."

"What is your price, Man?"

"Master. I am a Master. I am *the* Master. You, I recruit. You, I train. You, send to die in the arena. That is my function Remember it, Hobgoblin." The voice was harsh and low, the merest whisper. But the softness hid steel.

"I will remember, Aevrill, Master. I will not forget again."

"The price, then. For this ... 10 years. Your youth. Your strength. Your freedom. All these you will pay. The return will be wealth equal to your weight in gold for each year of the 10 you serve. Wealth to buy arms and warriors. But not this, alone. To serve your need, we offer this: the magic of the Masters to make you feared, the training of the Masters to make you hard, the support of the Masters to make you respected. All, we give ... for 10 years service. None have ever lasted that long. Nor shall you. But we will keep our promise. It is agreed?"

The youth stood lost in thought. Ten years of service! The price was almost beyond belief. For those who fought against the men-things from beyond the mountains the normal term was five. Bad enough, that. But ten! Unconsciously, the Hobgoblin crouched in upon himself. The great left arm extended, a knuckle brushing the ground. The shattering of hopes was loud in his ears, like the sound of breaking glass in the hearthholds of the man-things when the Great Goblins of his tribe raided to the south. The stranger threw aside his cloak and placed a bony hand on a jewelled hilt. A snarl broke from the youthful Hobgoblin's throat. Then, slowly, as if in pain, the youth straightened and calmed. The voice, when it finally came, was like a millstone grinding fine the meaning of the words.

"It is agreed. Ten years."

"Ten years." The sun was behind the mountain, now. The stranger's face was lost in shadow as he turned and led the way to the horses which he had tethered near the rim of the Blood Cup. Together, the two figures rode into the night and mist. The Eye closed.

The corners of the arming pen thrilled to a rumbling cadence that filled the room. In pulsing, fevered leaps, it grew into the somber chant that spoke in the tongue of Goblins and Hobgoblins, of death and regeneration and the way of the warrior. Mind blank, eyelids tightly shut, Kargash sang the song taught him by his mother as she suckled him deep within the caves of Nergil-hin. The Death Song of the Urdin, the tribes of the North, it was a song that he had lived with for ten years and never understood, the first song of his people and, usually, the last a Hobgoblin ever heard.

Before each combat for ten years the Great Goblin had sung it just as now to conclude the Rite of Preparation. But now it was different. Now, it would be the last time. The ending of things. For Kargash had seen his death. Now, he must prepare for it as he never had before. Slowly, lovingly, he reached out to embrace the song, to enter into it and merge his being with it until, finally, the two were one and the song sang back to Kargash as Kargash sang the song.

The notes still hung in the air when, with a soft squeeling, the bolt that held the outer portal was drawn and light flooded into the arming pen from the arena above. Slowly, the Inner Eye opened once again, only this time it was still inside the Hobgoblin and so was touched by the throbbing energy of the still-living body, the body that did not want to die but somehow knew that there was no alternative this day.

Kargash sat for a moment after the portal opened. Then, with infinite care, he rose and walked to the rack beside the portal where stood his weapons. The attendant who had opened the portal gestured impatiently and Kargash felt a moment of irritation. Then, the Eye calmed him and he drew a sword from the rack, a second weapon in case the heavy poleaxe that he preferred should fail him. Outside, the roaring of the crowd grew and Kargash knew that the Arn-thing had entered the arena. Turning, he motioned the attendant aside and strode into the painful sunlight.

THE ARN-THING STOOD fifty feet away. It fingered a heavy broadsword. On the offside arm there hung a shield of bronze and hide. A dueling helmet covered the head and part of the face. The eyes, where they showed through the slits in the leather of the helmet, could not be seen at this distance, but Kargash knew them to be pale blue and death-aspected. The man-thing took several practice swipes with his sword. Kargash smiled, knowing that the practice was for his benefit. The sounds of the crowd began to die away and a single voice could be heard speaking above the remaining murmur.

"... thank you. All hear the next event. In single combat, the man, Arn of the Vale meets the Hobgoblin, Kargash Urdin, property of the Schoolman, Aevrill. Combat to the death. No quarter to be asked or given."

The Herald turned and found his seat and the trumpeters brought up their instruments to sound the commencement. Kargash lifted his head to search out the box where he knew sat his owner and patron. The Master, Aevrill, met his eyes. There was neither fear nor guilt in his gaze. Merely understanding. Understanding and, yes, perhaps, pity. Kargash recoiled. Pity, it was! Yes! Pity because Aevrill would not pay the price agreed upon and so would pit his loyal fighter against the Goblin-Slayer in a match which could have only one end. Pity because Kargash should have died years before without the bittersweet knowledge that his goal was in sight. Pity because the dream which had brought the Hobgoblin to spend his youth never was a goal at all, but merely the lying promise of a Master.

The trumpets brayed their warning and the crowd cheered. Out of the corner of one eye, Kargash saw the Arn-thing tense and begin to close the gap that still separated the two of them. Kargash laughed to himself. Fool, he thought. Fool that would bargain with the Masters. Fool that would pursue the mirage into the embrace of death. You were a fool, Kargash. You....

The bitter musing still teased at his mind as he brought up the poleaxe to block the last rush he knew was coming. The Arn-thing stopped, wary. Only a bare ten feet still separated the two when the Hobgoblin finally raised his guard. Deliberately, Kargash hunkered down and began to move the tip of his weapon ever so slightly, keeping the flickering blade poised on the edge of commitment, but never allowing its motion to become more than could easily be arrested with a slight tensing of his massive biceps.

The Arn-thing too hovered on the brink without rushing over into the abyss they had both been taught to avoid. Shuffling easily across the hot sand, the man-thing moved counterclockwise. He too kept his blade up, but uncommitted. He too moved in a slight crouch, teasing, testing. Looking for an opening, Kargash thought. Unconsciously, the Hobgoblin gave him one. The blade of the poleaxe continued to follow the circling man, but ever more slowly, until, seeing a gap, the Arn-thing struck. The sword blade rattled along the haft of the poleaxe in a block which allowed the man to step inside the Hobgoblin's guard. Spinning, the Arn-thing brought his blade around in a savage, two-handed swing which the Hobgoblin automatically ducked while attempting to rake his opponent with his longer weapon. Both missed. They once again began the slow circling that had marked the beginning of the contest. The faster man moved around the almost stationary Hobgoblin who pivoted to follow.

THE PAIN FROM THE SUN WAS intense. It burned the back of Kargash's neck and made his eyes dry so that they rasped in their sockets and went in and out of focus. Shaking his shaggy head, the Hobgoblin momentarily cleared his vision and made an assessment. With a growl, he brought up the heavy pole weapon and slashed at the Arn-thing, The momentum of the miss carried the weapon over his head and to his left. Seeing the opening, the man stepped in, swinging his own weapon from the waist so as to cut the Hobgoblin in two. But Kargash never stopped his swing as again he brought the poleaxe around in a gleaming arc from the right. The circular swing had brought the Arn-thing within striking range, as planned. Both weapons connected within a split second of each other, the poleaxe shattering the man's shield and biting into the arm it sheltered while the sword blade whirred within inches of the Hobgoblin's chest to sever Kargash's wrist.

The man-thing staggered back, partly borne away by his momentum, partly carried on the wings of his pain. Dropping his sword, he knelt clutching at the mangled arm which still had the now useless shield strapped to it. The weight of that shield was a screaming agony which pulled the broken member to the sand below. Scrabbling frantically, the Arn-thing managed to tear the bronze weight free and in a single shuddering motion recover the broadsword at his knees. He was breathing heavily, gulping the life-giving air into tortured lungs, trying to maintain consciousness in the face of the pain which beat at him like a wall.

Kargash also stumbled back, dropping his pole weapon, his severed left hand still tightly clasped to it. Dizzily, the Inner Eye searched downward to alight upon the stump of the left wrist. Black blood still gouted from the wound, staining the rich red sand a deeper color, splashing over the Hobgoblin's feet and legs. Quickly, the Hobgoblin ripped the necklace from around his neck and took several rapid turns around his wrist with the rawhide cord. Grasping the cord in his teeth, he used his good hand to tie off the pulsing arteries. With a harsh intake of breath, Kargash looked up to see the wounded man-thing almost upon him again. In the same motion, he drew his sword and brought it up to block the slash the Arn had aimed at his head. The blades rang and Kargash's guard fell. He raised it again to block the second stroke that the Arn-thing directed at him. Again steel rang on steel. Again the Hobgoblin's guard dropped. The man-thing continued to beat down the Hobgoblin's blade as Kargash retired step by step, absorbing the fury of the attack, reeling from loss of blood, desperately trying to shield vital areas from the flickering death.

Above the pounding of his temples, Kargash could hear the screaming of the crowd. They were on their feet now, scenting the kill about to occur. Kargash's opponent also smelled the approaching end and attempted to redouble the attack. But the pain of the broken arm was too great and sapped strength and will. After a few moments more, he was forced to cease.

The two crouched facing each other. Both panted raggedly, glaring at the other through a haze of exhaustion. Sweat sheened their faces and glistened on their limbs. Muscles twitched and leapt in the wake of their efforts. The left arm of the man-thing hung limp at his side. It was rapidly purpling where the bone had broken and a slight trickle of blood oozed from a six inch gash in the forearm. Kargash's own arm he held tightly to his side. As the shock of the wound began to pale, the stump started to throb painfully. Stinging sweat mingled in the wound with the slow leakage of black blood which the makeshift tourniquet could not entirely stop.

Again the two circled each other. The first fire had departed, true, but the fight was now more deadly than ever. Even the restless crowd, disappointed in their expectations earlier, had developed a murmuring awareness that the next passage must be the last, that what had gone before was only prelude.

The Goblin-Slayer feinted. Kargash was drawn in. Not far enough to allow a death blow, but the snickering steel sheered away a piece of his left ear in its passage as the Arn-thing completed his riposte. The hot sun made the blood congeal all the quicker and Kargash soon felt a gumminess coating that side of his head. It tickled where a tiny drip of fresh fluid continued to drip from the wound and run down his neck. The two circled again.

Once more the man feinted and struck, but this time the Hobgoblin was ready. As the broadsword flew in its lethal arc, he jumped back, then back again. The manthing was not quite recovered from the attempted blow when the Hobgoblin's short-sword flashed at his throat. Now, it was the man who must twist away to save his life, falling backward into the sand, necessarily giving the goblin the advantage of height in order to more surely pull the vulnerable neck and face away from the force of the blow. As the shoulders struck the arena floor, the man twisted once again, kicked and rolled and left a fountain of red sand behind where a sandaled foot had slipped as he attempted to rise in mid-turn.

IT WAS THE SAND that saved the man, for some of it entered the Hobgoblin's eyes as he lurched after his vulnerable foe so that his vision was temporarily obscured while the man regained his feet. Ignoring the meat and gristle which bulged from a bleeding rent in his neck, the Arn-thing continued his rising turn, striking with all of his remaining strength, sending his broadsword singing in a single arching blow aimed at the Hobgoblin's exposed belly.

The blinded Hobgoblin did not see, but the Inner Eye was well aware of the flaming arc of steel which marched to meet living flesh. The body attempted blindly to recoil, but the inexorable progress of the shining steel must needs outdistance the frenetic backward leap. As the Inner Eye took over once again, the motion of events was slowed so that a flash of time became measureable in seconds. The rising sound of the crowd fell away before the liquid sound of metal cutting through sodden tissues and soft organs. The Inner Eye watched as the dying body collapsed, falling forward in a graceful dive to meet the welcoming sand that spouted into the air where the body's mass displaced it.

Tiny motes of sand hung glittering in the sun like so many fireflies come to light in the passage of a dead soul. A heavy foot rolled the Hobgoblin onto his back and a bronzed face framed by hair like pale gold blotted out the sky. The Arn-thing's eyes were, indeed, like ice. They danced and glittered. A smile played at the corners of his mouth as the man saw that his enemy was truly dead. The Inner Eye twitched, then relaxed. An answering smile spread across the face of the corpse.

Away in the distance a song rose over cool stands of dark evergreens from out of the dark recesses of deep caverns. It was a song of death and regeneration and the way of the warrior and it seemed to spring from a thousand mouths of Goblins eons dead. Its measured chanting climbed above the sound of roaring crowds and snickering steel to wipe away all pain and loss. As the final dying notes fell away, the Inner Eye closed upon itself. Kargash Urdin had returned to his people. ■■

Arena of Death

Heroic Combat in the Fantasy World of DragonQuest

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Read This First:

The rules to *Arena of Death* are organized by major topics arranged in the order in which they occur in the play of the game. Each such major topic is given a number and a name below which is given (usually) a General Rule or Description which summarizes the rules in that section. This is usually followed by numbered paragraphs called Cases, which give the specifics of the rules. Note that the numbering of the Cases is a decimal form of the Major Section number. Players should examine the map and counters and then quickly read the rules (without trying to memorize them). Then the game should be set up to play and a "trial run" made.

1. Introduction
2. Game Equipment
3. Character Generation
4. Foes
5. The Arena and the Crowd
6. Basic Procedure
7. Maneuver Actions
8. Martial Actions
9. Restrictions on Actions
10. Strike Procedure
11. Inflicting Damage
12. Grievous Injury
13. Weapons
14. Unarmed Combat
15. Experience

REMOVING THE RULES FROM THIS ISSUE:
Open the magazine to the center, bend the staples with a penknife or screwdriver; lift out the rules and close staples.

Inventory of Game Parts

Each game of *Arena of Death* should contain the following parts:

One 17" × 22" mapsheet

One sheet of die-cut counters (100 pieces)

One rules folder (bound into *Ares* version)

One set of Randomizer chits (not in *Ares* version)

One game box (not in *Ares* version)

If any of these parts are missing or damaged, notify SPI's Customer Service Department.

Rules Questions

Should you have any difficulty interpreting the rules, please write to SPI, phrasing your questions so that they can be answered by a simple sentence, word, or number. You must enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. We cannot guarantee a proper answer should you choose to phone in your question (the right person is not always available — and since SPI has published hundreds of games, no one individual is capable of answering all questions). Write to:

SPI
Rules Questions Editor for
Arena of Death
257 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10010

SPI, publisher of *Arena of Death*, and **Adversary Games** of Jacksonville Florida, publisher of *Arena*, mutually recognize each others' exclusive rights to their respective titles.

[1.0] Introduction

COMMENTARY:

There is a land where the sun dies. Or so the old men say. Off to the west. Behind the mountain wall. Hidden in a shadowed valley. A land of mist and terror. Inhabited by gods, some say. Inhabited by monsters, say others. The tales are not precise. They contradict. They twist and turn through realms of gibbering horror and so stray far from truth. Or so it seems.

Yet ever...ever the old tales speak with a single voice of one great wonder, one unholy marvel. The Arena, it is called. It is, they say, an edifice of gold and gems. And there the lords of that land are wont to recline on couches all draped in finest silks and nibble at sweetmeats in scented languor while others fight and die. For this, it seems, is their diversion, that others shall sweat and gasp and bleed on the sands below while they, the gods, remain untouched above.

This, then, is the tale that is told of that place. Each year many go to seek it, for the gods pay well for such amusements and men have returned rich from that fabled land. But they are few. Most do not return, but die upon the sands of that far place, the victims of its lords. A year, those men must serve to win the riches offered the survivors. A year of fighting other men and pitting feeble flesh against great beasts. 'Tis death, my parents tell me. And hardship in a far and lonely place. So few prevail. So few return to spend the treasure of those gods. I understand their worry. I fear this thing, myself. But the land is poor and hard and so I must, I think, go to win great wealth and slake my sword in the Arena of the gods. To find the land where the sun dies.

GENERAL RULE:

Arena of Death is a game of gladiatorial combat in a fantasy setting. The Players take on the role of fighters in the arena, pitting these fighters against each other and against fearsome beasts over the course of a variable number of "combats." Each combat consists of one or more Players' characters entering the arena where they meet one or more characters controlled by other Players. The combat lasts until only dead or mutually friendly characters remain in the arena. The individual combats can be played as stand-alone games or they can be played as part of a complete campaign lasting until one Player's character fullfills the victory conditions as listed in 1.1.

Note: *Arena of Death* is a stand-alone adventure using the combat system from SPI's *DragonQuest*. As such, the game uses the counters and Tactical Display from that game. The combat systems presented in *Arena of Death* can be adapted by using the provisions of *DragonQuest* combat as optional rules for this game. However, *Arena of Death* can be played in its entirety without reference to *DragonQuest*.

PROCEDURE:

The Players (2-20 with half a dozen optimal) decide whether they wish to simply generate characters and pit them against each other in a single game or employ them in a multi-combat campaign. *Arena of Death* was designed for replay in its campaign form and provides the most play value in this form, but Players should be forewarned that the campaign will require repeated play sessions over a period of time. Once a mode of play has been decided upon, the Players should generate, arm and armor their characters and/or choose any figures they wish to face from the Foes Table (4.1) and enter the arena as per 4.0. The Basic Procedure given in 6.0 is followed for each individual combat. The rules in this Section are employed whenever a campaign is to be played.

CASES:

[1.1] Players win by increasing their character's Popularity Rating.

Before embarking on a campaign, the Players should determine what level of Popularity is to be considered the object of the game. The Popularity Rating of a given character is a measure of the amount of treasure the character can garner as a result of his year's service in the arena from the grateful lords he has entertained. The higher the Popularity Rating to be achieved, the longer the campaign will be. A level of 20 would, for example, be achievable in a short game of several actual combats. A level of 35-40 would require a longer campaign consisting of many more sessions, but would leave much more room for strategy. The Players are each represented by one character, and the first Player whose character increases his Popularity to the desired level wins.

[1.2] A Player can generate a new character if his old character dies.

Players may only play one character at a time. However, a character may always generate a new character if his old character is dead. There is no limit on the number of times that a Player can generate a new character.

[1.3] Players take turns sending their characters into the arena.

Each game session in the campaign consists of one combat for each character in the game. Players may choose to enter the arena alone or in concert with each other. They may even decide to engage in duels. However, one and only one combat per Player character must be conducted per session. A character can never "sit out" a session (not participate in some combat).

[1.4] Players take turns playing each other's foes.

Whenever a Player wishes to enter the arena, he states the circumstances under which he will enter, including the Difficulty Factor of the foe(s) he expects to meet (unless entering a duel) and what weapon(s) or shield he will have prepared when he enters the arena. He then selects one other Player who is not sending his character into the arena immediately to play the foe(s). This Player must select one or more foes whose total Difficulty Factors are equal to or within 50 points of the Difficulty Factor chosen by the Player(s) entering the arena. Throughout the combat, the Player who selected those foes plays them as if they were his character. Players may not announce that they desire to battle foes whose total Difficulty Factor is less than the sum of 6 of those characters' Attributes (PS, MD, AG, EN, FT, and WP).

[1.5] Players may challenge each other to duels.

No Player is ever required to accept such a challenge.

[1.6] The order in which individual combats are resolved is determined by a random die roll.

Each Player should be given a number and D10 should be rolled to determine the order in which combats are resolved. The Player whose number first comes up resolves his combat first, the Player whose number next comes up goes second and so forth. Only one number should be given to a group of Players who wish to enter the arena together. **Note:** The randomizer chits provided are actually better suited to this purpose than dice since unassigned numbers can be removed from the container in which the chits are placed.

[1.7] Once a Player announces the Difficulty Factor of the foe(s) he desires to meet, his character must enter the arena.

A Player's character cannot "back out" of a combat except by suffering the same penalty as a character who flees the Tactical Display.

[1.8] All wounds are healed and arms and armor repaired between combats.

In the campaign, damage suffered by a Player's character is considered instantly healed between combats (unless the character has died) and all weapons and armor are restored. The characters are considered to undergo a variable period of rest and recuperation between bouts of combat. Only loss of Popularity as a result of fleeing the Tactical Display or throwing a weapon into the crowd is permanent. Loss in Attributes due to the removal of Damage Points or Grievous Injury is always temporary, and such losses are recovered between combats.

[1.9] All members of a multi-character party must agree in advance of announcing the formation of the party who will join it and what the Difficulty Factor of its foes will be.

Only when all Players are in agreement concerning the number and composition of the party and the relative strength of their foes is the party formed. Any number of characters may make up a single party.

[2.0] Game Equipment

GENERAL RULE:

The game equipment consists of the Tactical Display, 100 die-cut cardboard playing pieces, 20 die-cut cardboard randomizer chits and these rules (including charts and tables). Two percentile dice are used in play and must be provided by the players. Alternatively, the Players may choose to use the randomizer chits included in the game to generate a two-digit read-out between 01 and 00 (with 00 equalling 100).

Special Note: *Arena of Death* is a stand-alone game based on SPI's recently released *DragonQuest* fantasy role-playing game and is designed as an introduction to some of the concepts and terminology of the parent product. It uses the same Tactical Display and counters as *DragonQuest* and many of the same rules, but does not have that game's complexity. In addition, only Side B of the Tactical Display (containing the blank hex grid) and part of the *DragonQuest* counters are used in *Arena of Death*.

CASES:

[2.1] The Tactical Display (Side B) represents an open arena in which combat occurs.

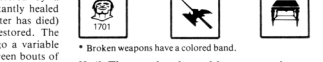
A hexagonal field has been superimposed over the playing area to help regulate the movement and positioning of the playing pieces. Side A of the Tactical Display is not used in *Arena of Death*.

[2.2] The charts and tables printed in the rules are used to resolve various combat functions and generate combatants.

The tables include the Action Point Expenditure Chart, Armor Table, Shield Table, Weapons Table, Special Damage Table, Grievous Injury Table, Combat Modifier Tables, Attribute Generation Chart, Foes Table and the Experience Schedule. Two types of record sheet are also included.

[2.3] The cardboard playing pieces are used to represent individual figures and dropped or broken weapons.

Each character or foe is represented by an individual counter on the Tactical Display. Whenever a weapon is dropped or broken, the location of the weapon is marked by the placement of a counter on the Tactical Display. The furniture and fixture pieces are not used in *Arena of Death*.



* Broken weapons have a colored band.

[2.4] The randomizer chits are used to generate random numbers necessary to the resolution of various game functions.

The white chits should be placed in one opaque container and the black chits should be placed in another. Whenever a D10 (one) die roll is necessary, one chit should be drawn from either container. Whenever a D100 (two) dice roll is necessary, one chit each should be drawn from both containers. Once drawn, chits should be immediately replaced. Whenever a "0" is drawn, it should be read as "10." Whenever two "0" counters are drawn, they should be read as 100. In all other cases, one chit draws are read as a one-digit number and two chit draws are read as two-digit numbers.

[3.0] Character Generation

GENERAL RULE:

There are two types of characters in *Arena of Death:* Player Characters and Non-Player Characters. Non-Player Characters are those figures that are not used in a campaign and do not use or accumulate Experience Points. They are discussed in 4.0. Player Characters are those characters which represent the Players, themselves, and which can actively participate in an ongoing campaign of *Arena of Death*. Player Characters can be of one of 5 races: Dwarf, Elf, Halfling, Human or Orc. Each of these races is listed on the Attribute Generation Chart (see 3.9) along with the Base Number for each of their Attributes and a number of unassigned Attribute Points which the character's Player must assign to the character before it can enter the game.

PROCEDURE:

The Player chooses the race of the character. This determines the character's basic characteristics given as a Base Number for each Attribute. The Player then assigns up to 1/4 (round down) of the Attribute Points available from the "Unassigned" column for that type of character to each of the character's Attributes. He may spread Unassigned Attribute Points among the character's Attributes in any manner he chooses, but he may assign no more than 1/4 of the available points to any one Attribute and he must assign all of the Attribute Points in his Unassigned column to some Attribute. Attribute Points may be assigned to PS, MD, AG, EN, FT, or WP. They may not be assigned to APA or POP. Once all Attribute Points have been assigned, the Player determines the character's APA adjustment and determines how the character will be armed and armored. The character is then ready to enter the arena.

CASES:

[3.1] A Player Character's Action Point Allowance is adjusted for Agility.

After a character has been armed and armored and all available Attribute Points have been assigned, the character's Player adds 1 to the

character's Action Point Allowance for every 3 (or fraction) which the character's modified Agility is above 15 or subtracts 1 from the character's Action Point Allowance for every 3 (or fraction) the character's modified Agility is below 15. Anytime the character's Agility is altered (added to or subtracted from due to the use of accumulated Experience or a Grievous Injury) or the type of armor the character is wearing is changed, the character's Action Point Allowance must be recalculated. This is true even in the middle of a combat.

[3.2] A Player Character's Agility is modified by the armor the character is wearing.

The Agility Penalty column on the Armor Table lists the number of Agility Points which must be subtracted from the character's Agility whenever a particular type of armor is worn. A character's Player selects the type of armor that a character will wear when he generates the character. He may change the type of armor worn at any time when the character is not actually occupying the Tactical Display (not in combat). He may not change or discard armor during combat.

[3.3] A Player Character may be armed with up to 5 items from the Weapons Table and/or Shield Table.

As part of the process of generating the character, a Player must arm that character. He may change the arms the character carries (or replace lost or damaged items) at any time when the character does not occupy the Tactical Display. A character may never carry more than one shield or one pole weapon. He must be armed with at least one knife. Otherwise there is no restriction on the type of weapons the character's Player may carry so long as the character does not enter the arena armed with more than 5 items. A character may pick up dropped weapons while on the Tactical Display without hindrance due to this rule except that he may never possess (in any state) more than one pole weapon and more than one shield.

[3.4] The character's Attributes determine his capabilities in combat.

Physical Strength (PS) determines the type(s) of weapons that can be used to full effect and the relative difficulty of withdrawing from Close Combat. **Manual Dexterity (MD)** determines what weapon(s) the character can use to full effect and affects the character's chances of hitting another figure. **Agility (AG)** determines the difficulty of hitting the character and also determines the character's chances of maintaining his balance in a difficult situation. **Endurance (EN)** determines how much punishment the character can take before being killed, stunned, or knocked unconscious. **Fatigue (FT)** determines how much punishment the character can take before physical damage results and the character's effectiveness in combat is reduced. **Willpower (WP)** determines the character's chances of keeping his head and withstanding a charge attack. The character's **Action Point Allowance (APA)** determines how much the character is likely to accomplish during a Round of combat. The character's **Popularity (POP)** determines whether he can successfully appeal to the crowd to save his life in a difficult situation and is used to determine victory in a campaign.

[3.5] A Player Character's Manual Dexterity is affected by having a shield Prepared.

The Shield Table lists under the Manual Dexterity column the number of points that are subtracted from a character's Manual Dexterity whenever that character has a particular type of shield Prepared. The type of shield carried may be changed at any time the character does not occupy the Tactical Display.

[3.6] The Player's should complete a Character Record Sheet for each Player Character in the game.

As part of the Character Generation procedure, each character should have a Character Record Sheet completed for him. This sheet should contain the character's name, the Player's name, the character's Attributes and any details concerning arms, armor and shields which the Player may find useful. The Character Record Sheet also has a box in which to record the accumulation of Experience Points in the character's Experience Point Pool and boxes for use in recording loss of Fatigue and Endurance in combat. This form should be machine-copied for repeated use.

[3.7] Character Record Sheet
(see charts and tables)

[3.8] Character Record Sheet Diagram
(see charts and tables)

[3.9] Attribute Generation Chart
(see charts and tables)

[4.0] FOES

GENERAL RULE:

Player characters may be pitted against each other in the arena or they may be pitted against Non-Player Characters taken from the Foes Table (see 4.1). The Foes Table lists 17 species of monster against which characters can be pitted. Each monster's Attributes are listed on the Foes Table along with a Difficulty Factor (DF column) representing both the relative difficulty of combating the monster and the Experience Points the Player's may gain by doing so successfully. As each foe is selected, a NPC Record Sheet should be filled out for that foe.

CASES:

[4.1] Foes Table
(see charts and tables)

[4.2] Description of Foes
(see charts and tables)

[4.3] NPC Record Sheet Diagram
(see charts and tables)

[4.4] NPC Record Sheet
(see charts and tables)

[5.0] The Arena and the Crowd

GENERAL RULE:

The Tactical Display Side B is used to represent the arena in which the action of the *Arena of Death* occurs. The Tactical Display is considered to be bordered by an unclimbable wall above which sits the crowd. The four corner hexes constitute the only means of exiting the Tactical Display. A figure (i.e. a Non-Player Character or Player Character occupying the Tactical Display), may exit the Display via any one of the four corners by entering a corner hex and paying 1 additional Action Point (regardless of the Action used to enter the hex) to exit the Tactical Display via any hexside on the margin of the hexfield.

PROCEDURE:

At the beginning of the game, the figure with the highest Agility is placed in any corner hex by his Player. Then the figure with the next highest Agility is placed in the opposite corner hex (diagonally across the board from the first figure) by his Player if that figure is hostile to the first figure placed on the Display. If *friendly* to the first figure, the second figure is placed on the Display in any hex adjacent to the first figure, or within one or more hexsides form the perimeter of the hexfield. This procedure is followed with each succeeding figure being placed in a hex which is part of the hexfield perimeter and which is also adjacent to a friendly figure already placed on the Display until all figures have been placed. Play may then commence. Once play begins, the Tactical Procedure described in 6.0 is implemented until all figures remaining on the Display are either dead or friendly toward each other. A figure may exit the Display at any time via the corner hexside but suffers a penalty for doing so.

CASES:

[5.1] A figure who flees the Tactical Display before the end of combat gains no Experience Points for the combat and suffers a loss of 3 from his Popularity Rating.

Combat continues until all figures on the Display are dead or friendly to each other. If a figure exits the Display before this state of events intervenes or if this state of events results from his exiting the Display, the penalties cited above immediately apply. A figure which exits the Tactical Display cannot be harmed further as a result of the combat even if a hostile figure follows him through the same exit hex.

[5.2] Whenever a figure (other than a monster) has 1/3 or less of his Endurance remaining, the figure's Player may ask for quarter (even if the figure, himself, is unconscious).

The Player then rolls D100. If the result is equal to or less than 3 times the figure's Popularity Rating, the crowd will insist that the figure's life be spared. The attendants employed by the arena immediately rush out and pick up the figure, carrying him to safety while the other figures occupying the Tactical Display are paralyzed by the magic arts of the Masters. The figure may not be harmed further. It is removed from the Tactical Display and has no further effect on play. If the result of the die roll is greater than 3 times the figure's Popularity, the appeal fails and the figure may be further harmed (or killed). Only one appeal may be made per figure per combat. Three entire Rounds (including the Round in which the appeal was made) are considered to pass in the event of a successful appeal, during which the body is removed from play, all fighting ceases, and figures on the Tactical Display may implement only Pass Actions. Figures may recover from stun during this period.

[5.3] Any weapons which fly off the Tactical Display are considered to have flown into the crowd and to be irrevocably lost.

A figure who Hurls a weapon which exits the Tactical Display automatically and immediately has his Popularity reduced by 2. This loss is permanent.

[6.0] Basic Procedure

GENERAL RULE:

Each game of *Arena of Death* consists of an indeterminate number of Rounds, each of which is equal to 10 seconds of real time. Each Round consists of a variable number of Pulses of unspecified duration. In each Pulse, figures occupying the Tactical Display move and fight by expending one or more Action Points (AP's) from their individual Action Point Allowances (APA's). Each figure in turn announces and implements one (and only one) Action per Pulse from among those Actions listed on the Action Point Expenditure Chart (9.8). When all figures on the Tactical Display have implemented some Action, the Pulse is ended. A new Pulse is then executed if any figure has AP's remaining. When no figure on the Tactical Display has AP's remaining, the Round is over, figures receive a new allotment of AP's equal to their APA, and a new Round begins. This sequence of events is repeated until the only figures remaining on the Tactical Display are either dead or friendly to each other.

Figures implement Actions during a Pulse in order of their Agility. The order in which figures implement Actions is determined at the beginning of the game and is adhered to throughout.

CASES:

[6.1] Figures perform Actions in order of their modified Agility.

The figure with the highest modified Agility implements one Action first, then the figure with the next highest modified Agility and so on until all figures have taken some Action. If two or more figures have the same Agility, use some random method to determine which of the two (or more) figures goes first (high die roll, for example). The order in which figures implement Actions is determined at the start of the game and is adhered to throughout.

[6.2] Figures perform Actions by expending 1 or more Action Points per Action.

All Actions which a figure can perform are listed along with their AP cost in 9.8. They are explained in detail in 7.0 and 8.0.

[6.3] A figure may never expend more Action Points during a Round than he has available in his Action Point Allowance.

A figure may not perform an Action unless he has sufficient Action Points remaining to pay the Action Point cost to perform that Action. **Exception:** see 7.8.

[6.4] Figures may perform only one Action per Pulse.

In some cases, an Action may involve two or more separate operations (i.e. changing facing while implementing an Assail Action). In such cases, the separate operations are always considered to be part of the Action being performed, and all of the operations may be performed in the same Pulse. Figures are always considered to be in the act of performing the last Action their player selected for them (regardless of the Pulse) unless they have been stunned, killed, or knocked unconscious. A figure who has been stunned, killed or knocked unconscious is considered to be implementing a Pass Action, regardless of what Action his player last chose for him.

Example: If a figure implemented a Pass as his Action for the last Pulse, and was attacked before he had an opportunity to implement a new Action this Pulse, he would be treated as if he were in the act of Passing.

[6.5] Action Points may never be accumulated between Rounds or transferred between figures.

[6.6] Figures must expend all of their available Action Points during a Round.

Once all Action Points available to all figures on the Tactical Display have been expended, the Round is over and a new Round begins. Until that time, each figure must implement some Action each Round, even if only to Pass. Once all of a figure's Action Points have been expended, he may only implement Pass Actions for the remainder of the Round, regardless of the actions of other figures on the Tactical Display. It costs "0" Action Points for a figure whose Action Point Allowance has been expended to implement a Pass Action.

[6.7] A figure may expend all of his Action Points during a Pulse.

There is no limit to the number of Action Points that can be expended during a Pulse except the APA of the figure taking action. However, a figure may implement only one Action per Pulse and may implement that Action only once during the Pulse. When a figure has no remaining Action Points, he must implement a Pass Action each Pulse until the Round is ended. A figure who has Action Points remaining must expend two Action Points or all of his remaining Action Points (whichever is less) if he desires to implement a Pass Action.

[6.8] Figures may perform only permissible Actions during a Pulse.

A "permissible Action" is one which is listed on the Action Point Expenditure Chart (9.8) and which the figure is currently capable of performing given his posture, condition and position relative to other figures on the Tactical Display. The Actions permitted figures are described in detail in 7.0 and 8.0. Restrictions on which Actions figures can implement are discussed in detail in 9.0.

[7.0] Maneuver Actions

GENERAL RULE:

Maneuver Actions are those Actions primarily involved with alterations in the relative positioning of the figures on the Tactical Display. Figures using maneuver actions may not enter a hex occupied by another conscious figure (either hostile or friendly). They may, however, move across the Tactical Display, alter their relative facing, and change their posture.

PROCEDURE:

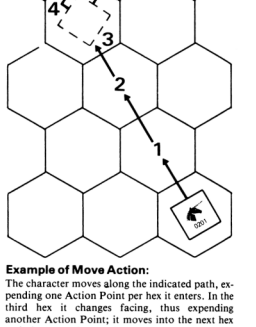
All figures on the Tactical Display must occupy a single hex and face in a single direction within that hex. This is represented by having the playing piece representing a figure placed entirely within a single hex with the top of the piece facing any one of the six sides of that hex. The hexside that the top of a playing piece is facing is considered to be the hexside the figure is facing. That hexside and the two hexsides adjacent to it which make up part of the figure's hex are called the figure's Front Hexsides. The other three sides of the hex are called the figure's Rear Hexsides. Any figure which is ambiguously faced may be adjusted so as to face a single hexside by the opposing Player.

A figure may change its facing by implementing a Turn Action at a cost of 1 AP per hexside of facing changed. A figure may enter one or more contiguous hexes by expending one or more Action Points to implement a Move, Bob, or Shift Action. When implementing a Move or Bob, the figure may only enter another hex through one of its Front Hexsides. Figures may also back out of a hex by implementing a Withdraw Action and may alter their posture by implementing Rise or Drop Actions.

CASES:

[7.1] A figure may Move through up to 4 contiguous hexes through his Front Hexsides at a cost of 1 Action Point per hex entered.

The figure may move in any direction(s) up to 4 hexes or the limits of his APA, whichever is less. However, he may only enter hexes through his Front Hexsides and must retain the same relative facing in the hex entered unless he pays the appropriate numberof AP's to change facing. The figure may change facing freely during this movement at a cost of 1 Action Point per hexside of facing changed. The figure must cease all movement (including facing changes) upon entering any hex of the Strike Zone of a hostile figure. A figure implementing this Action may never increase the distance between himself and a hostile figure (in hexes) whose Strike Zone he has occupied at any time during the Pulse.



Example of Move Action:
The character moves along the indicated path, expending one Action Point per hex it enters. In the third hex it changes facing, thus expending another Action Point; it moves into the next hex and then spends an additional Action Point to change facing once more. It ends movement in the final hex. The entire maneuver costs 7 Action Points. **Note:** If the character had entered an Enemy Strike Zone as it moved, it would have to stop its movement.

[7.2] A figure may Shift into up to 2 contiguous hexes by expending 3 Action Points to enter each hex.

Shifting is a special type of movement by which a figure can enter a hex via his Rear Hexsides. A figure implementing a Shift may not increase the distance (in hexes) between himself and any hostile figure whose Strike Zone he has occupied at any time during the Pulse. He may change his facing at a cost of 1 AP per hexside of facing changed. He is not required to cease movement upon entering the Strike Zone of a hostile figure. *[continued on page 23]*

Arena of Death Charts and Tables

[4.2] DESCRIPTION OF FOES

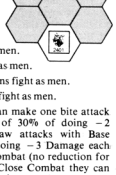
Bear: Bears may make two claw attacks in Melee Combat with a Base Chance of 35% of doing +2 Damage. They may bite in Close Combat with a Base Chance of 20% of doing +4 Damage. When in Close Combat, a bear can either bite and claw simultaneously, or it can attempt one "hug" attack, with a Base Chance of 60% of doing +8 Damage.

Boar: In Close Combat a Boar can make one tusk attack with a Base Chance of 50% of doing −1 Damage or it can make four trample attacks with Base Chances of 25% of doing −3 Damage. A Boar may only attack in Close Combat. It suffers no reduction in Strike Chance for making a Multiple Strike.

Centaur: In any one Pulse a Centaur can either attack as a Man (using a prepared weapon) or as a Horse. If it attacks as a Horse, it can bite with a Base Chance of 15% of doing D10 Damage and kick with a Base Chance of 35% of doing +8 Damage. The bite can be used in either Melee or Close Combat, while the kick can only be used in Melee Combat against an adversary who occupies the hex directly opposite the direction the Centaur is facing. The bite and the kick cannot both be used in the same Pulse.

Dire Wolf: Dire Wolves can bite in either Melee or Close Combat with a Base Chance of 65% of doing +6 Damage.

Dragonette: A Dragonette's most deadly weapon is its ability to breathe fire. It costs a Dragonette 6 Action Points to breathe flames. The fire fills a cone of six hexes immediately in front of the Dragonette. Any creature within these six hexes takes +2 Damage (not absorbable by armor or shields). There is no limit to the number of times a Dragonette may breathe fire. In Melee Combat a Dragonette can attack in any or all of three ways simultaneously without penalty. It can make two claw attacks (each with a Base Chance of 40% of doing +4 Damage), one bite attack with a Base Chance of 30% of doing +5 Damage, and it can attack any creature in the hex opposite the hex the Dragonette is facing with its tail (Base Chance of 60% of doing −2 Damage). If a character is hit by a Dragonette's tail, the character's Player must roll less than or equal to 5 times his modified Agility on D100 or fall prone.



Gnoll: Gnolls fight as men.

Goblin: Goblins fight as men.

Hobgoblin: Hobgoblins fight as men.

Hill Giant: Hill giants fight as men.

Leopard: Leopards can make one bite attack with a Base Chance of 30% of doing −2 Damage and two claw attacks with Base Chances of 30% of doing −3 Damage each Pulse during Melee Combat (no reduction for Multiple Strikes). In Close Combat they can make one bite and four claw attacks.

Manticore: Manticores have six tail spikes that they can hurl as javelins. Up to three spikes can be hurled during any one Pulse. Each volley of one to three spikes costs six Action Points. All spikes hurled in any one volley must be aimed at the same target. In Melee and Close Combat a Manticore can attack with two claws with a Base Chance of 60% of doing +5 Damage.

Minotaur: Minotaurs can either make one butt and one bite attack in Melee or Close Combat, or attack with a prepared weapon. The butt has a Base Chance of 40% of doing +3 Damage. The bite has a Base Chance of 30% of doing −1 Damage.

Ogre: Ogres fight as men.

Python: Pythons may only attack in Close Combat. Pythons attack by first biting with a Base Chance of 65% of doing +6 Damage. Once the snake has successfully bitten (inflicted 1 or more points of effective damage) it can attempt to crush its adversary. The crush has a Base Chance of 80% of doing +8 Damage. Once a Python has successfully bitten, it can no longer bite until the character bitten is crushed to death. Once a crush attack has inflicted one or more points of effective damage, the Python no longer needs to roll to see if it does damage, but rather it does damage automatically each Pulse that it attacks.

Tiger: Tigers can take one bite attack with a Base Chance of 45% of doing +2 Damage and two claw attacks with Base Chances of 30% of doing −1 Damage each Pulse during Melee Combat (no reduction for Multiple Strikes). In Close Combat they can make one bite and four claw attacks.

Troll: In Melee Combat trolls can attack twice with their hands with a Base Chance of 55% of doing +6 Damage or once with their teeth with a Base Chance of 35% of doing +4 Damage. In Close Combat both attack types can be used simultaneously with no penalty. Trolls also have a special ability which allows them to regenerate damage taken in combat. At the beginning of each Round, one point is added to a Troll's Fatigue or Endurance. Note, however, that a troll's characteristics can never be raised above the level at which they began.

Wolf: Wolves attack in Melee Combat with a Bite with a Base Chance of 60% of doing +1 Damage. In Close Combat, the Base Chance remains the same, but Damage goes up to +3.

[3.9] ATTRIBUTE GENERATION CHART

RACE	PS	MD	AG	EN	FT	WP	APA	POP	UAP
Dwarf	14	12	11	13	17	14	9	14	24
Elf	10	12	13	11	16	13	11	11	26
Halfling	9	14	13	12	15	14	10	15	22
Human	12	12	12	12	15	12	10	12	25
Orc	13	12	11	14	18	10	9	7	

Key: PS = Physical Strength. **MD** = Manual Dexterity. **AG** = Agility. **EN** = Endurance. **FT** = Fatigue. **WP** = Willpower. **APA** = Action Point Allowance. **POP** = Popularity. **UAP** = Unassigned Attribute Points which may be initially assigned to PS, MD, AG, EN, FT or WP (but not to APA or POP).

[4.1] FOES TABLE

CREATURE:	PS	MD	AG	EN	FT	WP	APA	NA	DF
Bear	38	13	13	33	38	9	10	4	350
Boar	28	14	13	29	23	11	11	3	150
Centaur*	20	17	16	16	25	17	13	5	300
Dire Wolf	26	25	20	22	28	28	12	5	500
Dragonette	45	20	18	20	27	24	12	7	850
Gnoll*	22	15	13	15	23	11	9	4	250
Goblin*	12	12	11	8	13	11	8	3	150
Hobgoblin*	24	15	15	16	24	11	10	4	200
Hill Giant*	26	14	13	28	32	17	9	3	300
Leopard	24	23	28	23	28	14	16	3	250
Manticore	30	23	28	13	23	15	11	8	400
Minotaur*	24	19	16	17	26	15	11	6	350
Ogre*	29	12	11	22	29	29	8	5	350
Python	48	0	12	28	33	14	9	3	500
Tiger	26	24	28	22	27	9	16	3	300
Troll	40	12	14	35	45	22	15	5	600
Wolf	16	19	19	18	33	29	12	3	200

Key: NA = Natural Armor. The number of Damage Points absorbed by the NPC's natural armor. Foes never wear armor into the arena. Their only protection is from natural armor or shields (if weapons users). **DF** = Difficulty Factor. **APA** = Action Point Allowance. The NPC's Action Point Allowance is **never** modified due to Agility. All other attributes are the same for foes as for Player characters. *Weapons user.

[12.4] GREVIOUS INJURY TABLE

DIE	Grievous Injury
1	Arm severely damaged. Target may only use a shield or a single one-handed weapon for the remainder of the combat.
2	Leg severely damaged. Target's Action Point Allowance reduced by 2 and Agility reduced by 3 (with possible additional effect on Action Point Allowance) for remainder of game.
3	Target is knocked unconscious. He immediately falls prone and has his Endurance reduced to 3.
4	Hand becomes temporarily crippled. Immediately drop any one weapon or shield. Target's Player rolls D10 and target's hand remains numb for a number of Rounds equal to the resulting die roll number. A figure cannot hold a weapon or shield in a hand which has been crippled in this manner until the figure recovers the use of the hand.
5	Massive chest injury. Target figure's Agility reduced by 2 (with possible additional decrease in Action Point Allowance) and APA reduced by 1 for remainder of combat. In addition, the severe pain reduces target's Willpower by 3 for remainder of combat.
6	Internal injuries. Target loses 2 from Strength, Agility, and Willpower and 1 from Manual Dexterity due to severe pain.
7	Glancing blow temporarily damages vision. Reduce Agility by 2 and Manual Dexterity by 5 for D10 Rounds.
8	Leg crippled. Target's Action Point Allowance and Agility each reduced by 3. In addition, the target may only exit the hex he currently occupies by adopting a prone position (i.e., crawling). He may stand, but may not move except while prone.
9	Injury extracts a cry of pain from target. Reduce Popularity by 3 if he has a Popularity Rating.
10	Target's heart damaged. He immediately dies.

Note: If the appropriate Grievous Injury cannot be applied to a figure (or if the figure has already suffered the same Grievous Injury during the course of the combat), no specific result from this table is applied. The target still suffers double damage to Endurance, but the Grievous Injury die roll is ignored.

[15.5] EXPERIENCE SCHEDULE

ATTRIBUTE	COST
PS	400
MD	350
AG	450
EN	500
FT	300
WP	275
PP	250
BC	200
DM	500

PS: The cost to increase the character's Physical Strength by 1. **MD:** The cost to increase the character's Manual Dexterity by 1. **AG:** The cost to increase the character's Agility by 1. **EN:** The cost to increase the character's Endurance by 1. **FT:** The cost to increase the character's Fatigue by 1. **WP:** The cost to increase the character's Willpower by 1. **PP:** The cost to increase the character's Popularity by 1. **BC:** The cost to increase the character's Base Chance of scoring a Hit with any one weapon chosen by the character's Player by 3. **DM:** The cost to increase the Damage Modifier for any one weapon of the Player's choice by 1 when used by the character. All increases are permanent (unless reductions occur due to combat damage).

[13.6] WEAPONS TABLE

Swords and Knives

WEAPON	PS	MD	BC	DM	RG	USE	HANDS
Knife	7	10	40	+1	8	RMC	1
Main-Gauche	7	15	40	+1	P	MC	1
Short Sword	11	12	45	+4	P	M	1
Falchion	12	11	50	+2	P	M	1
Scimitar	11	15	50	+3	P	M	1
Broadsword	16	15	55	+4	P	M	1
Bastard Sword	16	17	45	+5	P	M	1
Hand & a Half	17	16	60	+4	P	M	1*

Axes, Maces, Picks and Clubs

WEAPON	PS	MD	BC	DM	RG	USE	HANDS
Hand Axe	8	11	40	+2	8	RMC	1
Club	16	10	45	+2	6	RM	1
Mace	16	9	50	+3	5	RMC	1
War Hammer	15	13	45	+3	6	RMC	1
Flail	14	15	50	+2	P	MC	1
Battle Axe	14	14	60	+2	6	RM	1*
Morningstar	18	15	60	+4	P	M	1*
Great Axe	19	17	65	+6	P	M	2
Giant Club	25	9	50	+6	9	RM	1
Giant Axe	29	12	65	+10	6	RM	1

Polearms and Spears

WEAPON	PS	MD	BC	DM	RG	USE	HANDS
Javelin	13	15	45	+2	12	RM	1
Spear	15	14	50	+3	6	RM	1
Halberd	16	16	55	+3	P	M	2
Poleaxe	18	15	55	+4	P	M	2
Glaive	16	18	55	+5	P	M	2
Great Glaive	22	18	65	+9	P	M	2
Great Spear	20	16	55	+7	P	M	2

Special Weapons

WEAPON	PS	MD	BC	DM	RG	USE	HANDS
Improved Buckler	10	12	40	D	P	M	1
Other Shield	10	12	40	−3	P	M	1

PS: Physical Strength. The minimum modified Physical Strength a figure must possess to use the weapon to full effect. Characters without sufficient Physical Strength to meet this requirement pay 1 extra Action Point to strike with the weapon and the weapon, itself, does one point less damage for each point the character's PS is below the minimum required. **MD:** Manual Dexterity. The minimum modified Manual Dexterity the character must possess to use the weapon to full effect. Characters without sufficient Manual Dexterity to meet this requirement pay 1 extra Action Point to strike with the weapon and the weapon's Base Chance is reduced by 5 for each point the character's MD is below the minimum. **BC:** Base Chance. The basic chance of hitting a hostile character (expressed as a number). **DM:** Damage. The number of points automatically added to the die roll to determine damage (+1 would mean an addition of 1 to the die; −1 would mean a subtraction of 1). **RG:** The number of hexes through which a weapon may be Hurled at a target (a 'P' means that the weapon cannot be Hurled). **Use:** Use. The use to which the weapon can be put in combat. (**R:** Ranged Combat; **M:** Melee Combat; **C:** Close Combat). **Hands:** The number of hands necessary to wield the weapon effectively. A figure may use two 1-handed weapons or one 2-handed weapon at any one time. An asterisk (*) after this number indicates that the weapon is a 1-handed weapon which can be used 2-handed. If used 2-handed, the weapon does 1 additional point of damage.

[9.8] ACTION POINT EXPENDITURE CHART

ACTION	CODE	COST IN ACTION POINTS
Assail	A	4
Bob	B	2 per hex entered/ 1 per hexside turned.
Cache	C	3
Drop	D	2
Evade	E	2
Grapple	G	4
Hurl	H	3
Move	M	1 per hex entered or hexside turned.
Prepare	P	2
Charge	Q	1 per hex entered/ hexside turned; +4 to Assail or Grapple.
Rise	R	4
Shift	S	3 per hex entered/ 1 per hexside turned.
Turn	T	1 per hexside
Withdraw	W	4
Pass	X	2

[10.1] RANGED COMBAT MODIFIER TABLE

Whenever a figure engages in Ranged Combat, the Base Chance is modified by the addition of the following numbers where appropriate:

Each point attacker's MD is above 15	1
Each point attacker's MD is below 15	– 1
Each point target's AG is above 15	– 1
Each point target's AG is below 15	1
Each hex through which weapon is Hurled	– 5
Target is Kneeling or Prone	– 10
Target is currently implementing Actions M, S or W	– 5
Target is currently implementing Actions G or D	– 10
Target is currently implementing Actions B or E	– 20
Target is currently implementing Action Q	– 15
Attacker is changing facing anytime this Pulse	– 20
Target is partially shielded by other figure	– 20
Target is not the intended target of the attack	– 20
Target is attacked through a Rear Hexside	20

[10.2] MELEE COMBAT MODIFIER TABLE

Whenever a figure engages in Melee Combat, the Base Chance is modified by the addition of the following numbers where appropriate:

Each point attacker's MD is above 15	1
Each point attacker's MD is below 15	– 1
Each point target's AG is above 15	– 1
Each point target's AG is below 15	1
Target is currently implementing Actions B, E or G	– 10
Target is currently implementing Actions W or R	10
Target is Kneeling or Prone	20
Target is stunned or attacked through Rear Hexside	30
Attacker is Kneeling or Prone	– 20
Attacker has '0' Fatigue Points remaining	– 5
Target has '0' Fatigue Points remaining	5
Target is currently implementing Action Q	15
Attacker is implementing Action Q with prepared pole weapon or shield	20
Attacker is implementing Action Q without pole weapon or shield	– 15
Attacker is changing facing any time this Pulse	– 10

[10.3] CLOSE COMBAT MOD.

Whenever a figure engages in Close Combat, the Base Chance is modified by the addition of the following numbers where appropriate:

Each point attacker's MD is above 15	1
Each point attacker's MD is below 15	– 1
Each point target's AG is above 15	– 1
Each point target's AG is below 15	1
Each point attacker's PS is greater than target's PS	1
Each point target's PS is greater than attacker's PS	– 1
Attacker has '0' Fatigue remaining	– 15
Target has '0' Fatigue remaining	15
Target is stunned	20
Target is unconscious	30
Target is implementing Action Q	10
Attacker is implementing Action Q	– 10

[10.8] SPECIAL DAMAGE

STRIKE CHANCE IS:	GREVIOUS RESULTS ON:	DAMAGE AFFECTS ENDURANCE ON:
01–03	01	01
04–09	01	01
10–16	01	01–02
17–23	01	01–03
24–28	01	01–04
29–36	01–02	01–05
37–43	01–02	01–06
44–49	01–02	01–07
50–56	01–03	01–08
57–63	01–03	01–09
64–69	01–03	01–10
70–76	01–04	01–11
77–83	01–04	01–12
84–89	01–04	01–13
90–96	01–05	01–14
91–103	01–05	01–15
104–109	01–05	01–16
110–116	01–06	01–17
117–123	01–06	01–18
124–129	01–06	01–19
130+	01–07	01–20

Note: Though the Special Damage Table includes results for a Strike Chance of 130+, this chance is only useful for determining the chance of Grevious Injury or damage to Endurance. The highest possible dice roll is 100. A figure whose Player rolls 99 must always make a check to see if he breaks his weapon and a figure whose Player rolls 100 must always make a check to see if he drops his weapon regardless of the Strike Chance.

[11.8] ARMOR TABLE

PROTECTION RATING	ARMOR TYPE	AGILITY PENALTY
4	Leather	– 3
5	Scale	– 4
6	Chainmail	– 5
7	Partial Plate	– 6

Protection Rating: The number of Damage Points absorbed by the armor (i.e., not subtracted from Fatigue or Endurance). **Agility Penalty**: The number of points subtracted from the figure's Agility when wearing the armor (– 3 would mean a reduction of 3 in Agility). A figure's Action Point Allowance will be affected by the type of armor worn, since Action Points are allotted partly on the basis of Agility. **Note:** Armor is worn throughout a combat and thus need not be "prepared" in order to absorb damage.

[11.9] SHIELD TABLE

PROTECTION RATING	SHIELD TYPE	MANUAL DEXTERITY
2	Fencing Shield	– 1
3	Plain Buckler	– 2
3	Improved Buckler	– 3
1	Main-Gauche	– 1

Protection Rating: The number of Damage Points absorbed by the shield (i.e., not subtracted from Fatigue or Endurance). **Manual Dexterity**: The number of points by which the character's Manual Dexterity is reduced when he has a shield in a "prepared" state. **Note:** When not prepared, a shield is considered slung on the back of the figure, except for the Main-Gauche, which is a type of weapon that functions as a shield (carried in a scabbard and has no effect on combat when not prepared). A slung shield protects a figure when he is attacked through his Rear Hexside (i.e., the hexside directly opposite the hex he is facing). A prepared shield protects a figure when he is attacked through his facing hexside or any of the two adjacent hexsides on either side of the hexside the figure is facing. A shield absorbs a number of Damage Points equal to its Protection Rating whenever the figure is attacked through a hexside protected by the shield. A slung shield does not reduce Manual Dexterity; a prepared shield does.

Shields protect a figure who is engaged in Melee Combat or Ranged Combat, but not Close Combat. **Exception:** The Main-Gauche may be used as a weapon in Close Combat and may absorb damage. All other shields must be dropped by figures entering Close Combat. The Main-Gauche cannot be used to make a "shield attack" as described in 13.4.

[3.7] CHARACTER RECORD SHEET

PLAYER NAME:	Nick Karp			CHARACTER NAME:	Rolf the Barbarian			
ATTRIBUTES:	ARMOR TYPE: leather		PROTEC: 4	MOD AG: 13			FT LOST:	
PS: 18 MD: 16	SHIELD TYPE: Plain Buckler		PROTEC: 3	MOD MD: 14			HHT III	
AG: 16 EN: 16	Weapon: KNIFE	BC: 40	DM: +1	RG: 8	Use: RMC			
FT: 17 WP: 17	Weapon: MACE	BC: 50	DM: +3	RG: 5	Use: RMC		EN Lost:	
PP: 12 AP: 9	Weapon: FALCHION	BC: 50	DM: +2	RG: P	Use: M		////	
EXPERIENCE: 350	Weapon: SPEAR	BC: 50	DM: +3	RG: 6	Use: RM			
	Weapon:	BC:	DM:	RG:	Use:			

The example above shows the character, Rolf the Barbarian, as played by Nick Karp. Rolf wears Leather Armor and carries a Plain Buckler. He is armed with Knife, Mace, Falchion, and a Spear. The armor has modified his Agility from 16 to 13 and the Buckler, when Prepared, will modify his Manual Dexterity from 16 to 14. Rolf has 350 Experience Points in his Experience Point Pool which he can cash in on improved Attributes and has, during the current combat, taken 8 Fatigue Point losses and 4 Endurance Point losses. He would regain the Fatigue and Endurance between combats and the entries on the FT Lost and EN Lost boxes would be erased. If he turned in his accumulated Experience Points for improved Attributes, the number turned in would be removed from the Experience box.

[4.4] NPC RECORD SHEET

FOE TYPE: Bear -350		Attack Type: CLAW (2)	BC: 35	DM: +2	RG: P	Use: MC
ATTRIBUTES:	EN LOST:	Attack Type: BITE	BC: 20	DM: +4	RG: P	Use: C
PS: 38 MD: 13	HHT HHT I	Attack Type: HUG	BC: 60	DM: +8	RG: P	Use: C
AG: 13 EN: 33		Attack Type:	BC:	DM:	RG:	Use:
FT: 38 WP: 9	FT LOST: //	Attack Type:	BC:	DM:	RG:	Use:
NA: 4 AP: 10		Attack Type:	BC:	DM:	RG:	Use:

The sheet indicates that a bear with a Difficulty Factor of 350 has been encountered in combat. The bear has lost 11 Endurance Points in combat and 2 Fatigue Points (obviously from a lucky hit). It has three types of attacks that it can make: Claw, Bite, and Hug and is certainly still a dangerous foe even though wounded.

SPI grants permission to players to make photocopies of the Character Record Sheet and NPC Record Sheet for repeated play.

[3.7] CHARACTER RECORD SHEET

PLAYER NAME:		CHARACTER NAME:				
ATTRIBUTES:	ARMOR TYPE:	PROTEC:	MOD AG:		FT LOST:	
PS: MD:	SHIELD TYPE:	PROTEC:	MOD MD:			
AG: EN:	Weapon:	BC:	DM:	RG:	Use:	
FT: WP:	Weapon:	BC:	DM:	RG:	Use:	EN Lost:
PP: AP:	Weapon:	BC:	DM:	RG:	Use:	
EXPERIENCE:	Weapon:	BC:	DM:	RG:	Use:	
	Weapon:	BC:	DM:	RG:	Use:	

[4.4] NPC RECORD SHEET

FOE TYPE:		Attack Type:	BC:	DM:	RG:	Use:
ATTRIBUTES:	EN LOST:	Attack Type:	BC:	DM:	RG:	Use:
PS: MD:		Attack Type:	BC:	DM:	RG:	Use:
AG: EN:	FT LOST:	Attack Type:	BC:	DM:	RG:	Use:
FT: WP:		Attack Type:	BC:	DM:	RG:	Use:
NA: AP:		Attack Type:	BC:	DM:	RG:	Use:

[continued from page 18]

[7.3] A figure may *Bob* into up to 4 contiguous hexes by expending 2 Action Points to enter each hex.

Bobbing is a method of moving while dodging hostile weapons. It is identical in all respects to the Move Action except that it costs more to Bob and the figure receives a benefit if attacked while implementing this Action.

[7.4] A figure may increase the distance (in hexes) between himself and a hostile figure whose Strike Zone he occupies only by implementing a *Withdraw* Action.

It costs 4 Action Points to Withdraw. The procedure for implementing this Action is as follows:

The figure wishing to Withdraw moves backward into the hex immediately opposite the hex he is facing. He may never change facing while implementing this Action. Once he enters the hex to his rear, his Action is over and he may do nothing more that Pulse. He may not Withdraw a second time or implement any further Action. If the hex to his rear is occupied by a conscious figure (hostile or friendly) he may not Withdraw. If the hex to his rear is occupied by a dead or unconscious figure, he may Withdraw into the hex, but the withdrawing figure's Player must roll D100. If the resulting number is less than or equal to 5 times the figure's Agility, the Withdrawal is successful. If the result is greater than 5 times the figure's Agility, the figure trips and falls down in the hex into which he Withdrew. He is considered Prone.

A figure engaged in Close Combat may Withdraw only by first "breaking contact." The figure's Player rolls D10. On a roll of 10 or greater, the figure breaks contact and may successfully Withdraw. The figure's Player places the figure in any of the six adjacent hexes. The figure must be placed so that it faces the hex from which it successfully Withdrew. The die roll for breaking contact is modified as follows: The total PS and AG of all hostile figures in the hex is subtracted from the total PS and AG of all friendly figures in the hex and the result is added to the die roll.

[7.5] A figure may adopt a nonstanding posture by implementing a *Drop* Action at a cost of 2 Action Points.

All figures may be in three possible postures (in ascending order of height from the ground): Prone, Kneeling and Standing. A figure may adopt a lower posture by implementing a Drop Action. The figure's Player must announce which lower posture the figure is adopting. The cost to Drop is constant regardless of how many levels of posture the character drops. Kneeling and Prone characters may alter their facing at a cost of 2 Action Points per hexside of facing changed and may move (by crawling) as if implementing a Move Action, but at a cost of 3 Action Points per hex entered. They may not Bob, Shift or Withdraw. A figure who enters Close Combat immediately adopts a Prone Posture (at no additional cost) and a figure who Withdraws from Close Combat immediately adopts a Standing Posture (at no additional cost).

[7.6] A figure may alter his posture from a lower level to a higher level by implementing a *Rise* Action at a cost of 4 Action Points.

There is no additional cost to rise more than one level (from Prone to Standing). The figure's Player must state what the new Posture is in all cases.

[7.7] A figure may change his facing without otherwise moving by implementing a *Turn* Action at a cost of 1 Action Point per hexside of facing changed.

[7.8] A figure may *Pass* instead of taking some other specific Action at a cost of 2 Action Points or all of the figure's remaining Action Points (whichever is less).

If a figure has no Action Points remaining or is stunned, dead or unconscious, he is automatically taking a Pass.

[8.0] Martial Actions

GENERAL RULE:

Martial Actions are those Actions which are concerned directly with attempting to inflict damage on other figures or preparing weapons for this purpose. There are three distinct types of combat portrayed in the game: Ranged, Melee and Close. Ranged Combat is any combat involving the use of Hurled weapons to damage figures not adjacent to the attacker. Melee Combat is any combat involving figures who are adjacent to each other. Close Combat is any combat involving figures who occupy the same hex. A figure may only attack other figures who occupy the same hex or who occupy a hex of his Attack Zone.

All weapons are rated for use in one or more types of combat. A figure may employ a weapon only for the type(s) of combat for which that weapon is rated. **Example:** A Flail is rated for Melee and Close Combat, but not for Ranged Combat. It could never be Hurled. Figures may attack each other with any weapon listed on the Weapons Table or with a shield or bare hands.

Figures may suffer losses to Fatigue or Endurance as a result of combat, may drop or break weapons, become stunned or unconscious and/or suffer a variety of Grievous Injuries. The effects of combat are discussed in Sections 10.0, 11.0 and 12.0.

CASES:

[8.1] A figure may *Prepare* a weapon for use in combat by expending 2 Action Points.

A weapon must be Prepared to be employed in combat. Shields are prepared in the same manner as weapons, but may have an effect on combat while not in a Prepared state (see 11.9). A figure in the same hex as a conscious hostile figure may only Prepare a weapon that is rated for use in Close Combat. A figure may only have one shield and one one-handed weapon, or one two-handed weapon, or two one-handed weapons Prepared at any one time. He may only use a weapon two-handed if he has no other weapon or shield in a Prepared state. If a figure wishes to prepare a weapon that would cause him to violate this stricture, he may drop any prepared weapon(s) or shield so as to allow him to Prepare the new weapon as part of the Prepare Action. If the figure's Player is unwilling to take this course of action, the figure may not Prepare the weapon. A dropped weapon is marked by the placement of a weapon marker in the hex in which it is dropped. Any figure may pick up a dropped weapon by implementing a Prepare Action while occupying the hex with the weapon. A Cache Action could also be used for this purpose.

Unless and until Prepared, all weapons are considered slung in sheaths, etc. They do not affect the figure's ability to perform an Action with other weapons. Only one weapon or shield may be Prepared per Pulse by a figure. Once Prepared, a weapon remains Prepared until Hurled, Cached or dropped. Only Player-characters and non-Player characters who are weapons-users may use this Action.

[8.2] A figure may *Cache* a Prepared weapon in his possession by expending 3 Action Points.

Only figures who are not in the Strike Zone of or the same hex as a hostile figure may employ this Action. This Action allows a figure to pick up and/or put back in a sheath or stick in a belt any weapon in his possession or which occupies the same hex.

[8.3] A figure may *Hurl* a Prepared weapon at another figure at a cost of 3 Action Points.

The weapon must be rated for Ranged Combat to be Hurled. It may not be Hurled at a figure in an adjacent hex. A figure may change facing during the Pulse in which he Hurls a weapon at a cost of 1 AP per hexside of facing changed, but this will cause a decrease in accuracy. A figure may Hurl a weapon at a figure separated from him by a number of hexes equal to or less than the range of the weapon being Hurled.

[8.4] A figure may *Assail* an adjacent hostile figure with his bare hands or with a Prepared weapon which is rated for use in Melee Combat at a cost of 4 Action Points.

A figure may change facing while implementing this Action at a cost of 1 AP per hexside of facing changed, but this will adversely affect the figure's accuracy. Only one Strike Check may be made per weapon using this Action, though more than one attack is possible using different weapons at no additional AP cost (see Case 13.2).

[8.5] A figure may attempt to *Evade* an attack of any type which may be directed against him by expending 2 Action Points.

The Strike Chance is reduced whenever a figure implementing an Evade Action is attacked. The figure may change his facing as part of this Action at a cost of 1 AP per hexside of facing changed.

[8.6] A figure may move adjacent to a hostile figure and/or enter the hex occupied by that figure and either Assail or (if in the same hex) Grapple the figure in the same Pulse as that in which the movement was implemented by implementing a *Charge* Action at a cost of 4 Action Points plus the cost of any movement in which the figure engages.

This Action constitutes a special form of combat in which movement and attack are combined. The figure implements a normal Move Action, but may attempt to enter a hex occupied by a hostile figure who is conscious and may attack at the end of the movement portion of the Action. Whenever the Charging figure moves next to the object of his Charge, he must announce that he will Assail or attempt to enter Close Combat. If he Assails, a normal Melee Attack is resolved. If he attempts to enter Close Combat, the target figure's Player must make a Willpower Check by rolling D100. If the result is greater than or equal to 2 times the target figure's Willpower, the attacking figure enters the hex with the hostile figure and makes an immediate Grapple attack. If the result is less than 2 times the target figure's Willpower, the attacking figure is prevented by a determined

defense from closing the gap and entering Close Combat. The attacking figure must stop in the hex he occupies and may take no further Action. He may not attempt to Assail the target that Pulse.

[8.7] A figure may *Grapple* a hostile figure occupying the same hex at a cost of 4 Action Points.

A Grapple is a form of attack used only in Close Combat. It involves striking with hands and feet, biting, gouging, scratching, choking, etc. At any time that two figures who are hostile and conscious occupy the same hex, they are considered to be locked in Close Combat. They are considered Prone. Whenever a figure enters a hex occupied by a hostile conscious figure (via a Charge Action, only), both figures drop any weapons or shields not rated for use in Close Combat and have at one another. Only bare hands and weapons rated for Close Combat may be used by figures in this situation. In order to Strike at another figure in this situation, a figure must implement a Grapple Action. This is resolved in the same manner as an Assail or Hurl attack. When a Figure withdraws from close combat, he adopts a Standing Posture. Any other figures in the hex remain Prone.

[9.0] Restrictions on Actions

GENERAL RULE:

Figures may only perform those Actions listed on the Action Point Expenditure Chart (9.8). Each Action requires that the figure expend the number of Action Points listed on the Action Point Expenditure Chart. If a figure does not have the necessary Action Points remaining to pay the AP expenditure to implement an Action, he may not employ that Action. Figures who have no remaining Action Points must Pass. In addition, figures suffering from incapacitation due to being stunned or unconscious must Pass. The position of a figure in relation to other figures and his facing (physical attitude within his hex) also limit his scope of action.

CASES:

[9.1] A figure who is not adjacent to a hostile figure may implement Actions B, C, D, E, H, M, P, Q, R, S, T and X.

He cannot implement Actions A, G or W.

[9.2] A figure who is adjacent to, but not in the Attack Zone of a hostile figure may implement Actions A, B, C, D, E, H, M, P, Q, R, S, T or X.

He could not implement Actions G or W. He could not Hurl his weapon(s) at an adjacent figure.

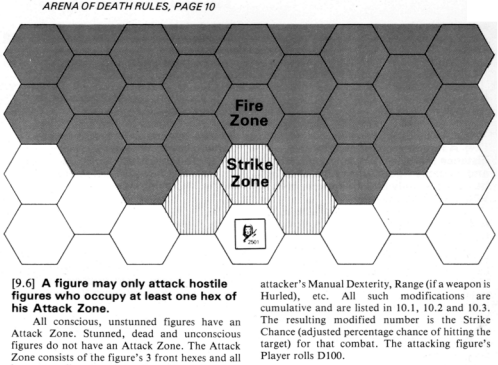
[9.3] A figure who is in the Strike Zone of a hostile figure could implement Actions A, B, D, E, H, M, P, Q, R, S, T, W or X.

He could not implement Actions C or G. He could not Hurl his weapon(s) at an adjacent figure. He could Charge any one adjacent figure even if this would mean exiting another hostile figure's Strike Zone so as to enter the hex of the figure being charged. He could not charge a figure who was not adjacent.

[9.4] A figure who occupies the same hex as a hostile figure who is conscious may employ Action E, G, P, W or X.

He could not implement Actions A, B, C, D, H, M, Q, R, S or T.

[9.5] A stunned or unconscious figure may only implement Action X (Pass).



[9.6] A figure may only attack hostile figures who occupy at least one hex of his Attack Zone.

All conscious, unstunned figures have an Attack Zone. Stunned, dead and unconscious figures do not have an Attack Zone. The Attack Zone consists of the figure's 3 front hexes and all hexes extending away from those 3 hexes in a cone as shown in the diagram above.

The figure's 3 Front Hexes are called his Strike Zone. The rest of the hexes in the figure's Attack Zone are called his Fire Zone. A figure may only Melee Attack figures in his Strike Zone. He may only engage in Ranged Combat against figures in his Fire Zone.

[9.7] A figure must meet all of the criteria necessary to implement an Action before he can expend Action Points to implement that Action.

For example, a figure who does not occupy the same hex as a hostile figure could not implement a Grapple Action.

[10.0] Strike Procedure

GENERAL RULE

A figure who is attempting to damage or kill another figure with his bare hands or with a weapon is said to be making a "Strike Attempt" against the target figure. In such cases, a "Strike Check" must be made to determine whether the attempt succeeds or fails. If the attempt succeeds, a "Hit" is said to have been scored against the target figure. Whenever a Hit is scored, a "Damage Check" must be made to determine the degree of damage suffered by the target as a result of the Hit. In some cases, an additional die roll must be made to determine what (if any) Grievous Injury has been inflicted on the target. If a Strike Check fails, it is possible that the attacking figure has dropped or broken his weapon (if any) or damaged himself (if unarmed) and a check must be made to determine the outcome of such a situation.

PROCEDURE:

The attacking figure's Player announces that the figure is making a Strike Attempt, plus the Action being implemented, the target of the attack and what weapon (if any) is being used in the Strike Attempt. The Player then announces the Base Chance for the Strike (listed on the Weapons Table for each weapon or calculated for unarmed combat; see 13.6 and 14.0). This Base Chance is always expressed as a number (e.g., 35, 40, 45) equal to the percentage chance of scoring a Hit with the weapon used (e.g., 35%, 40%, 45%). This Base Chance is modified by a number of factors, including the target's Agility, the attacker's Manual Dexterity, Range (if a weapon is Hurled), etc. All such modifications are cumulative and are listed in 10.1, 10.2 and 10.3. The resulting modified number is the Strike Chance (adjusted percentage chance of hitting the target) for that combat. The attacking figure's Player rolls D100.

1. If the resulting number is equal to or less than the Strike Chance, a Hit has been scored and a Damage Check must be made.

2. If the resulting number falls within the span indicated on the Special Damage Table as affecting Endurance, a Damage Check must be made and any resulting Damage Points are subtracted directly from Endurance (even if the target has Fatigue remaining).

3. If a Hit is scored, but does not fall within the span necessary to affect Endurance, the resulting damage is subtracted from Fatigue (unless no Fatigue remains, in which case, it is subtracted from Endurance).

4. If the resulting number falls within the span indicated on the Special Damage Table as causing Grievous Injury, a Grievous Injury results and the rules governing Grievous Injury take effect.

5. If the resulting number is 99, the attacking figure may break his weapon.

6. If the resulting number if 100, the attacking figure may drop his weapon.

CASES:

[10.1] Ranged Combat Modifier Table (see charts and tables)

[10.2] Melee Combat Modifier Table (see charts and tables)

[10.3] Close Combat Modifier Table (see charts and tables)

[10.4] Whenever a number is rolled which falls within the span given on the Special Damage Table as causing a Grievous Injury, a Grievous injury is inflicted on the target as per 12.0

[10.5] Whenever a number is rolled which falls within the span given on the Special Damage Table as causing Damage to be subtracted from Endurance, any Damage Points inflicted on the target are automatically subtracted from Endurance instead of Fatigue.

Damage as a result of combat is normally subtracted from Endurance only when Fatigue has been reduced to "0." However, when the Strike Check dice roll is 15% or less (as shown on the

Special Damage Table) of the Strike Chance, any damage is subtracted from Endurance exactly as if all the target's Fatigue had been exhausted.

[10.6] Whenever a 99 is rolled, there is a possibility that the attacking figure has broken his weapon.

The attacking figure's Player rolls D100. If the resulting number is equal to or less than 3 times the attacking figure's Manual Dexterity, there is no further effect (and the weapon remains undamaged). If the resulting number is greater than 3 times the figure's Manual Dexterity, the weapon is broken. A broken weapon marker is placed under the figure to indicate that that weapon in the figure's possession is broken. A broken weapon may be used normally, but the Base Chance of the weapon (and any damage done by the weapon) is halved (round down). If the broken weapon is broken again, it is useless. It is possible for a figure to score a Hit with a weapon in the same Pulse that the weapon is broken. In such cases, the effect of the weapon breaking is implemented *after* the resolution of the Strike Check in which the weapon was broken and affects succeeding Strike Checks (only).

[10.7] Whenever 100 is rolled, there is a possibility that the attacking figure has dropped his weapon.

The same procedure as that used in 10.6 is implemented to determine if the weapon is dropped. If the weapon is dropped, a weapon marker is placed in the hex to indicate its presence. Unlike a broken weapon, a dropped weapon automatically misses its target.

[10.8] Strike Damage Table
(see charts and tables)

[11.0] Inflicting Damage

GENERAL RULE:

Whenever the target of an attack is "hit," the target's Player must roll a die to assess the damage which the target figure suffers as a result of the Hit. Damage is assessed in terms of Damage Points which are subtracted directly from either Fatigue or Endurance. In some cases, armor and shields will absorb Damage Points before they can affect the target figure.

PROCEDURE:

The target figure's Player rolls D10 and adds to the result the (positive or negative) damage modifier for the weapon used in the attack. All modifiers are listed under the Damage Column of the Weapons Table (13.6). The resulting number is equal to the number of Damage Points the target figure suffers. For each Damage Point that a figure suffers, remove 1 point from the figure's Fatigue. If the figure has no Fatigue remaining or if the Strike Check dice roll was 15% or less of the Strike Chance, the Damage Points are subtracted from Endurance, instead. One Damage Point equals one point of Endurance for this purpose. If the dice roll is 5% or less of the Strike Chance, the target figure suffers a Grievous Injury (double damage + additional effects as specified on the Grievous Injury Table). If a figure has some Fatigue remaining, but not enough to satisfy the necessary damage, all damage which can be satisfied by removal of Fatigue is removed and the balance is ignored. Damage Points cannot be subtracted from both Endurance and Fatigue as a result of the same Strike Check.

CASES:

[11.1] A figure with 0 Fatigue Points remaining must subtract future damage from his Endurance.

Whenever a figure has no Fatigue, damage is subtracted directly from Endurance. In addition, figures with no remaining Fatigue suffer a penalty in the form of a modification to their Strike Chance (see 10.0).

[11.2] Damage dice rolls of less than "1" are treated as "1."

A figure never suffers "negative" damage due to modifications to the die roll. All modified rolls of "0" or less are treated as "1" for damage purposes.

[11.3] A figure becomes "unconscious" when he has 3 or fewer remaining points of Endurance.

Unconscious figures have no Attack Zones and are always considered to be prone. They may expend Action Points only to implement Pass Actions. They are treated for purposes of attack as if they were being attacked through a Rear Hexside, regardless of the hexside through which they are actually attacked. Unconscious figures may never recover consciousness. They may be killed by hostile figures unless they have been given "quarter."

[11.4] A figure is dead when he has no remaining Endurance.

Dead figures remain on the Tactical Display (to represent corpses). They have no Action Points and are always considered to be implementing a Pass Action

[11.5] Damage to figures may be absorbed by armor and/or shields.

All armor and shields have a Protection Rating which represents the number of Damage Points they absorb from each Hit scored against a target protected by them. Armor and shields are not damaged when they absorb Damage Points unless the figure using them suffers a Grievous Injury. Armor is always worn into the arena and automatically protects the wearer. Shields only absorb damage from Hits which pass through the hexside(s) protected by them (see 11.9).

Whenever a figure suffers a Grievous Injury, no damage is absorbed by armor or shields. The damage inflicted on the figure as a result of the Hit which inflicted the Grievous Injury is subtracted directly from Endurance with no lessened effect due to armor or shields. The Protection Rating of armor is reduced by 2 for each Grievous Injury that the wearer suffers. The Protection Rating of a shield is reduced by 1 for each Grievous Injury suffered by a figure as a result of a Strike through a hexside protected by the shield. A figure may always choose to allow his shield to be cloven rather than reduce the Protection Rating of his armor whenever he suffers a Grievous Injury as a result of a Strike through a hexside protected by the shield. A cloven shield absorbs no Damage Points.

[11.6] A figure is "stunned" whenever he suffers a number of effective Damage Points *greater than* 1/3 his Endurance as a result of a single Strike.

Damage absorbed by shields or armor does not count toward this total. The Damage Points are only considered "effective damage" if they are subtracted from either Fatigue or Endurance. If the number of Damage Points actually subtracted from one of these attributes is not more than 1/3 of the figure's Endurance, the figure will not be stunned regardless of the number of Damage Points scored against the figure. During each Pulse that a figure is stunned, the figure's Player rolls D100 at the moment that it becomes that figure's turn to implement an Action (and at a cost of 2 Action Points to Pass). If the dice roll is 4 times the figures Endurance or less, the figure recovers from being stunned. Stunned figures suffer a penalty to their defensive ability while stunned (see 10.2). They have no Attack Zone. Whenever a figure first becomes stunned, he may involuntarily drop any weapon or shield in his hands (see 13.5).

[11.7] A figure suffers a Grievous Injury whenever he is Hit and the Strike Check dice roll is within the range listed on the Special Damage Table as producing a Grievous Injury.

Whenever a figure suffers a Grievous Injury, the procedures and strictures of 12.0 apply.

[11.8] Armor Table
(see charts and tables)

[11.9] Shield Table
(see charts and tables)

[12.0] Grievous Injury

GENERAL RULE:

Whenever the Strike Check dice roll is 5% or less of the Strike Chance (as shown on the Special Damage Table, 10.8), the target figure suffers a Grievous Injury.

PROCEDURE:

Whenever a figure suffers a Grievous Injury, the damage die roll is doubled (after modification) and all damage is subtracted from Endurance (not Fatigue). In addition, the figure's Player rolls D10 and consults the Grievous Injury Table. The result on the Grievous Injury Table is applied to the figure in addition to any other damage he may have suffered.

CASES:

[12.1] A figure may suffer any number of Grievous Injuries during a game.

If it is not possible for a figure to suffer a particular Grievous Injury, then no specific injury is suffered, but double damage is still inflicted.

[12.2] Grievous Injuries affect Endurance (not Fatigue) and damage resulting from them is not absorbed by armor or shields.

[12.3] A doubling of damage takes place after the die roll has been modified.

[12.4] Grievous Injury Table
(see charts and tables)

[13.0] Weapons

GENERAL RULE:

All figures except those which are not weapons-users may enter the arena armed with up to 3 weapons plus a shield (or 4 weapons and no shield), only one of which may be a Pole Weapon. In addition, each weapon-user may carry a knife. Only one 2-handed weapon or two 1-handed weapons or one 1-handed weapon and a shield may be carried in a prepared state at one time, however. Whenever a figure attacks another figure, the attacker's Player must announce which prepared weapon the attacker is using to Strike his enemy. Only prepared weapons may be used to Strike an enemy. All weapon-using figures may enter the arena with the maximum permissable number of weapons in a Prepared state.

[13.1] A figure may attack without using a weapon.

A figure may attempt to Strike with bare hands, but only if he has at least one hand free to do so. A figure with only one prepared weapon

could normally attack with his bare hands instead of the weapon or he could make a Multiple Strike (one with bare hands and one with weapons). In certain cases, a shield can be used as a weapon.

[13.2] A figure may, under certain circumstances, make two attacks in the same Pulse.

A figure is permitted to implement only one Action per Pulse. However, a figure may attempt to Strike twice as part of the same attack with different weapons (one attack for the weapon in each hand). In such cases, the figure suffers a decrease in his ability to properly use those weapons. Whenever a figure's Player announces that the figure is employing any Combat Action, he may, if he has two prepared weapons or one weapon and one free hand, declare that he is making a "Multiple Strike." The figure pays the normal AP cost to make a single attack, but one attack is resolved for each weapon or hand used. The Base Chance for each attack is reduced by 20 whenever this option is used. The attacks need not be directed against the same figure, but they must be the same type of attack (i.e., a figure could not Assail one enemy and Hurl a weapon at another in the same Pulse). In some cases, figures may be able to make more than two attacks in a Pulse. Whenever this occurs, the Base Chance for each attack would be reduced by 20 for each Strike above one.

[13.3] Ranged Combat is only possible when the attacking figure has a weapon rated for Ranged Combat prepared and has a Line of Sight to the target he is attacking.

A Line of Sight is defined as any straight line from the center of the attacking figure's hex to the center of the target figure's hex which does not pass through any other figure which is not prone. If the Line of Sight passes through a Rear Hexside of the figure being attacked, that figure is considered the object of a Rear Attack. The Line of Sight continues through the target figure's hex indefinitely and any weapon which does not Hit the target will continue to fly along the Line of Sight until it does hit someone, exits the Tactical Display or travels a number of hexes equal to its Range. If the weapon is a thrown weapon, it will drop to the ground in the last hex that is equal to its Range unless it hits a figure or exits the Tactical Display. If the weapon passes through the hex containing the target (i.e. does not Hit), a Strike Check must be made for each hex which contains a figure which the weapon subsequently enters, regardless of whether the figure is friendly or hostile. Each Strike Check involving a figure who was not the announced target of a weapon has a Strike Chance 20 less than the original Strike Chance. In addition, 5 is subtracted from the Strike Chance for each prior Strike Check made for a weapon during its flight. If more than one figure occupies a hex into which a weapon flies, a Strike Check is made for each figure in order of Agility (lowest to highest) until one figure is Hit or one Strike Check has been made for all figures in the hex.

[13.4] A figure may use a shield as a weapon.

A figure may use his shield to Melee Attack another figure with a Base Chance of 40% that he will do −3 damage (D10 damage for the Improved Buckler). In addition, there is a chance that the target of the attack will be knocked to the ground by the attack. The target's Player rolls D100 and if the result is greater than 5 times the target's Agility, the target falls prone. This check is modified by subtracting the target's Physical Stength from the attacker's Physical Strength and then subtracting the result from the target's modified Agility (i.e. from the Agility multiplied by 5). The Main-Gauche cannot be used in this manner. If the attacking figure is making a shield attack as part of a Charge Attack, the Strike Chance is increased by 20 and the target's Player must roll less than or equal to 3 (not 5) times his Agility or fall prone.

[13.5] Whenever a figure suffers a Grievous Injury or is stunned, there is a possibility that the figure will drop any weapon or shield which he holds in a prepared state.

Implement the same dropped weapon procedure as is used when a Strike Check dice roll is 100. See 10.6. Each prepared weapon is checked individually.

[13.6] Weapons Table
(see charts and tables)

[14.0] Unarmed Combat

GENERAL RULE

A figure may employ Combat Actions using unarmed combat techniques (i.e., without the need to use a weapon). The figure executes Combat Actions in the same manner whether armed or not. However, the attacking figure always uses his own Base Chance and Damage Modifier instead of that for a weapon. The Base Chance to Strike another figure with bare hands is always equal to the attacking figure's Agility plus 5. The modification to the damage die roll is always −4. In addition, for each point the attacking figure's Physical Strength is above 17, 1 is added to the Base Chance and to the damage die roll. Whenever a figure misses (fails to Hit) while Striking without a weapon, he may damage himself. The figure's Player rolls D100. If the result is greater than 4 times the character's Agility, the character inflicts a number of Damage Points on himself equal to the Protection Rating of the armor worn by the target figure (or the figure's Natural Armor where appropriate). If the target is unarmored, 2 points of damage are inflicted. This rule does not apply to non-weapon users attacking with their natural weapons.

[15.0] Experience

GENERAL RULE:

Player Characters (but not NPC's) gain experience by winning (or surviving) combats. This experience is gained in the form of Experience Points. At any time that a character is not actually occupying the Tactical Display, the character's Player may turn in any of that character's accumulated Experience Points to increase that character's Attributes. Until turned in, a character's Experience Points are kept in his Experience Point Pool (represented by the Experience box on the Character Record Sheet). Once turned in, Experience Points may not be reused. They are permanently expended.

PROCEDURE:

Whenever a character is awarded Experience Points, the character's Player records the number of Experience Points awarded on the Character Record Sheet (making a note of the number in the Experience box). When the Player decides to cash in those points, he reduces the Experience Pool by the appropriate number and permanently increases the Attribute he wishes to have affected by the Experience Points according to the Experience Schedule in 15.5.

CASES:

[15.1] The Difficulty Factor for a Non-Player Character is equal to the number of Experience Points divided up among the Player Characters present during combat with that Non-Player Character.

The Player Character who actually kills an NPC is awarded 50 additional Experience Points above and beyond those represented by the NPC's Difficulty Factor. The Experience Points represented by the Difficulty Factor are divided equally among all surviving Player Characters who occupy the Tactical Display at the end of the combat. Dead characters, characters who flee the Tactical Display and characters who make a successful "appeal to the crowd" receive no Experience Points.

Example: Rolf, Lazar and Urgan fight a Troll with a Difficulty Factor of 600. Rolf flees the Tactical Display at one point in the combat and Lazar (who is seriously wounded) makes an unsuccessful "appeal to the crowd." Urgan manages to chop the Troll in half with his Great Axe, removing the Troll's last point of Endurance (and killing it). Rolf receives no Experience Points (EP's) since he fled. Lazar receives 300 EP's (half the value for the Troll) despite his appeal to the crowd since he was unsuccessful and he did not actually exit the Tactical Display. Urgan receives 350 EP's (his half of the Difficulty Factor for the Troll + 50 for delivering the "death stroke").

[15.2] The Experience Points gained by Player Characters as a result of combat with other Player Characters is equal to two times the total PS, MD, AG, EN, FT and WP of all hostile characters involved in that combat.

This award is granted whether the hostile characters are actually killed or flee the Tactical Display or are saved by an "appeal to the crowd." The same procedure applies here as in 15.3, including the awarding of 50 extra EP's to a character for actually delivering a death stroke to an enemy.

[15.3] Experience Points which are traded in for an increase in Attributes are never recovered.

A character's Player could not decide to decrease an Attribute by 1 and re-use the EP's represented by that 1 point to increase some other Attribute by 1. Once traded in, EP's are lost.

[15.4] Any Experience Points accumulated by a character who is subsequently killed are permanently lost.

They are not redistributed to other characters who may have participated in past combats with the deceased.

[15.5] Experience Schedule
(see charts and tables)

ARENA OF DEATH
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The Weapons of the Arena of Death

The Specifications, Usage, and Characteristics of Medieval Arms

by John Greer

ILLUSTRATION BY TED KOLLER

based on information from *A Glossary of the Construction, Decoration and Use of Arms and Armor* by George Cameron Stone. Jack Brussel, 1934.

Most of the heroic fantasy genre is set in the medieval era of man's experience. Chainmail, plate armor, axes, swords and shields are, indeed, a hero's common panoply. Perhaps the choice of weaponry and general allusion to the medieval era harkens to the rather simplistic virtues and morals of a more romantic age of human history. Indeed, to be able to gain riches, recognition and glory simply by one's wit and prowess with a broadsword certainly appeals to the "Walter Mitty" in most of us. The science fiction and heroic fantasy epics like *Conan the Barbarian*, Tolkien's *Ring Trilogy*, and *John Carter of Mars* are all either set in a medieval environment or use the weaponry of the times.

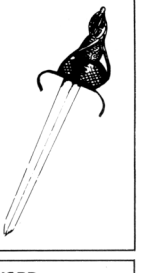
This weaponry forms one of the common denominators by which all of the epics can be compared. When Conan, Aragorn or Gawain engage in mortal combat, the weapons they use are all drawn from a common list. The weaponry developed over the dawn of man's history to approximately the sixteenth century provide an abundant source for swords, knives, axes and more specialized instruments of war. There are so many special weapons developed that relatively few of the more interesting ones ever get into heroic fantasies! The more mundane broadswords, hand axes and the like are common enough, but rarely will a falchion, war hammer or glaive ever make it into a story. Once in awhile serried ranks of something or other bearing a weapon similar to a poleaxe will appear but the hero, alas, is restricted to his trusty broadsword.

In the following segments, the various classes of medieval weapons will be reviewed, then each weapon described. Hopefully, a better understanding of their uses, capabilities, and weaknesses will surface, as will a respect for the reality of the purpose of the weapon as an instrument of war. It's fun to imagine the panache of hand-to-hand combat (Hollywood has dramatically helped here) but quite another to imagine the impact of a blow received from a handaxe or war hammer. Instruments of war, a euphemism for weapons, are meant to kill, and these medieval weapons were designed to cut, pierce, smash or hack an enemy to death.

SWORDS AND KNIVES

Far and above the most common sidearm in heroic literature, these bladed weapons were equally as abundant and universally utilized in medieval warfare. The knife, in fact, has been cited as being the most generally used weapon in history. The knife appears in innumerable variations, in as many styles and forms as there were uses for it. The first sword was undoubtedly a cutting weapon; the stabbing capability of the sword's blade was later discovered and developed. It was universally used in antiquity, in its various forms, and was perhaps the single most common weapon used by all peoples and virtually all social classes. By the beginning of the fourteenth century however, the feudal state and its sharp delineation of social classes deemed the sword specifically a weapon of the nobility. The knife and crude variations of the sword were permissable for the lower classes. As plate armor increased during this century, however, the restrictions were lifted; by the century's end, the sword was again used by all classes.

MAIN GAUCHE



Length: 12 inches.
Weight: 1 pound.
Construction: Straight and double-edged blade, with prongs on the hilt, a short grip and a hand guard of plate metal.
Means of Employment: A left handed dagger, used as a parrying weapon to catch an enemy's blade.
Typical User: An extensively trained swordsman only.
Note: This weapon actually belongs to the late sixteenth century and was used with the rapier while fencing. A favorite weapon in the *Three Musketeers* and *The Count of Monte Cristo* genre.



KNIFE

Length: 6 to 12 inches.
Weight: Less than 1 pound.
Construction: Single edged steel blade with wooden or metal handle.
Means of Employment: Cutting or thrusting; properly swung underhand, point upward.
Typical User: Usually a secondary or tertiary weapon of any combatant, in any social class.



SHORT SWORD

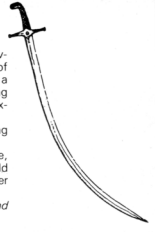
Length: 12 to 24 inches.
Weight: 1 to 2 pounds.
Construction: Either single or double edged steel blade with short wooden, leather or metal grip.
Means of Employment: Either cutting or thrusting, but seldom both.
Typical User: Usually employed by a lower social class, or as a secondary weapon for a combatant armed with a missile weapon.

FALCHION



Length: 20 to 30 inches.
Weight: 2 to 3 pounds.
Construction: A curved, sharpened cutting edge and a heavy straight and blunt back edge, broad toward its point.
Means of Employment: Exclusively a cutting weapon, swung overhand, and used like a meat cleaver.
Typical User: Any class could use it, including Men At Arms, but it was originally an archer's weapon.

SCIMITAR



Length: 26 to 36 inches.
Weight: 1 to 2 pounds.
Construction: The long thinly curved steel blade is set in a grip and hilt of metal, wood or other material; a single edged weapon, the point being practically useless owing to the extreme curvature.
Means of Employment: Cutting weapon, swung overhand.
Typical User: The Persian sabre, common to the oriental world, could be used by most classes with proper training.
Note: The Moors in *Song of Roland* used this weapon extensively.



BROADSWORD

Length: 33 to 36 inches.
Weight: 3 to 4 pounds.
Construction: The blade is flat and wide, double edged, tapering from the hilt and terminating in an obtuse point. The grip was wooden, covered with leather or cloth and bound with wire or leather.
Means of Employment: Cutting weapon, swung overhand.
Typical User: Usually a Man At Arms, but also anyone with training. Not usually employed by levies or peasantry, but even then, not terribly uncommon.
Note: Practically every hero in fantasy from the Arthurian legends to John Carter of Mars uses this weapon.



BASTARD SWORD

Length: 24 to 30 inches.
Weight: 2 to 3 pounds.
Construction: Rather than a flat blade, a cross section of the *estoc* or thrusting sword resembled an elongated diamond or lozenge. There were no sharp edges, it was merely long, narrow, and tapered to a very sharp point.
Means of Employment: Thrusting only; it was used to aim for the small cracks between plates of armor. Frequently the user would hook two fingers over the cross guard of the hilt to guide the thrust of the blade.
Typical User: Exclusively a weapon of the Men At Arms.

HAND AND A HALF SWORD



Length: 48 to 55 inches.
Weight: 4½ to 5 pounds.
Construction: An extremely long weapon, the four-foot long blade is set into a seven inch long grip and hilt. The blade is of tempered steel, with a grip usually of wood or metal.
Means of Employment: Used with either one or two hands; a cutting and hacking weapon swung overhand.
Typical User: Men At Arms.
Note: Lancelot cleaved the helm of the Green Knight with such a weapon in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur.*

AXES, MACES AND CLUBS

Primitive man picked up a tree limb, broke off a few branches and had a "club." By tying a stone to a stick he produced a "mace," by sharpening one edge, an "axe." This second category of weapon is clearly older or at least as old as the first. These weapons were, as were swords and knives, universally used by the ancients. To the medieval mind, these weapons were usually resigned to the lower class, until of course, with the evolution of plate armor, cutting edge weapons like the sword were unable to keep up with their offensive capabilities (armor was progressing rapidly for the defensive). Medieval thinking was "if you can't cut it – smash it!" Thus, the adoption of the nobility of such "inferior weapons" such as the mace, hammer and flail.



WAR HAMMER

Length: 27 to 33 inches.
Weight: 3 to 4 pounds.
Construction: Normally a two foot long metal shaft with a three-inch hammerhead backed with a long tapering spike.
Means of Employment: A piercing or smashing weapon; swung overhand.
Typical User: Men At Arms, either as a primary or secondary weapon.



FLAIL

Length: 12 to 18 inches.
Weight: 3 to 6 pounds.
Construction: A wooden handle was attached to an iron coupling, from which one or more chains were suspended; each chain was attached to either a spiked iron ball or iron bars.
Means of Employment: Swung overhand, as a smashing weapon.
Typical User: Men At Arms exclusively. (See Morningstar).

BATTLE AXE



Length: 48 to 60 inches.
Weight: 6 to 7 pounds.
Construction: The axe blade was attached to a four foot long wooden handle reinforced with lengthwise metal strips known as "langets." The single blade was often surmounted by a spike at the top.
Means of Employment: Swung with two hands; used as a cutting and hacking weapon.
Typical User: Trained Men At Arms, and certain other trained elite troops.

MACE



Length: 24 to 30 inches.
Weight: 4 to 6 pounds.
Construction: Usual form was a two foot long wooden handle with an iron head radially projecting eight flanges and a spike at the top.
Means of Employment: Swung overhand, as a smashing weapon.
Typical User: Almost exclusively, in this form, a knightly weapon.
Note: Soon went out of vogue, as the flanges frequently smashed into armor, but could not be readily extricated.



MORNINGSTAR

Length: 48 to 60 inches.
Weight: 6 to 7 pounds.
Construction: To a four-foot wooden pole was affixed a studded oblong or globular iron head which was rounded with spikes, each as long as three inches.
Means of Employment: Swung with two hands as a smashing and piercing weapon.
Typical User: Men At Arms and trained infantry.
Note: This weapon and a variant, in effect a flail mounted on a longer pole, were nicknamed "Holy Water Sprinklers" during medieval times.



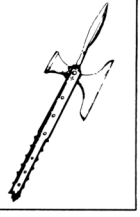
HAND AXE

Length: 18 to 24 inches.
Weight: 2 to 3 pounds.
Construction: A blade, often with a spike or "claw" on its opposite side, into which a wooden handle was solidly fitted.
Means of Employment: Swung with a single hand, either as a cutting, piercing or hacking weapon. Occasionally it was used to throw at an opponent, hopefully remembering to do so only when one had a second weapon.
Typical User: Any and all.

POLEARMS AND SPEARS

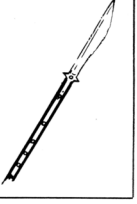
By simply sharpening the end of a tree branch, a spear is produced. The evolution of stone and the metal blades attached to this very simple weapon reached its zenith during the medieval period. In antiquity, spears had but a single blade with varying lengths of haft or pole, When the Macedonian phalanx, armed with eighteen foot long spears or "pikes," was defeated by the legions of Rome, the pike fell into disuse, while shorter spears remained. The average spear in general use during the early medieval period was rather short. As cavalry assumed growing dominance, it was realized that improvements were necessary for infantry to have a chance against them. This realization produced the combination of the infantry spear and effective battle axe (including experimentation with hooks), giving the length needed to thrust the spear point or the swing needed to utilize the axe or hook. All pole weapons were merely variants emphasizing one or more of these particular capabilities.

POLEAXE

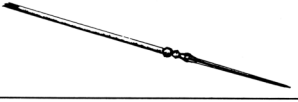


Length: 60 to 72 inches.
Weight: 4 to 5 pounds.
Construction: Very similar to the halberd in construction, the only difference being in the blade, as it combined spear, axe, and the hammerhead of the war hammer.
Means of Employment: Two handed weapon for cutting, hacking and smashing.
Typical User: Men At Arms almost exclusively; it was the favorite weapon of dismounted knights in the fifteenth century.

GLAIVE



Length: 72 to 78 inches.
Weight: 4 pounds.
Construction: A long (eighteen to twenty-four inch) slightly curved single edged knife blade was attached to a wooden shaft reinforced with langets.
Means of Employment: Used with two hands; it was a piercing, cutting and hacking weapon.
Typical User: Any trained troopers, but not a favorite weapon of the Men At Arms. The Scots Guard of the French Kings used this weapon.



JAVELIN

Length: 36 to 48 inches.
Weight: 1 to 2 pounds.
Construction: A wooden shaft either with a sharpened point or a metal blade affixed.
Means of Employment: Usually thrown; could be used as a thrusting or piercing weapon.
Typical User: Peasantry or untrained masses, usually.

HALBERD

Length: 60 to 72 inches.
Weight: 4 to 5 pounds.
Construction: The halberd blade was fixed upon a wooden shaft reinforced with langets. It combined spear point, axe blade and bill hook.
Means of Employment: A cutting, piercing or hacking weapon, swung by two hands.
Typical User: Men At Arms or highly trained troops.



SPEAR

Length: 72 to 118 inches.
Weight: 4 to 8 pounds.
Construction: Similar to the javelin, only mounted with a blade over twelve inches in length.
Means of Employment: Used with one or two hands as piercing or thrusting weapon, either over or underarm.
Typical User: The average, not particularly well trained masses. It would be the common weapon in use by most armies of the era.



In heroic literature, great battles are fought, glorious and epic hand-to-hand encounters are more than frequent, and usually the hero receives at least one wound. In the gaming world, which draws from the very same literary traditions, wounds are so frequent that they become quite ridiculous.

Blows delivered by these weapons on unarmored parts of the body were ghastly. The broadsword was quite capable of hacking off a limb entirely. A near miss could inflict a five inch long gash, perhaps two to three inches deep, without any trouble at all. The spear thrust could easily penetrate three to four inches of torso, even through padded leather armor. Plate armor was supposed to be impervious to many swords and similar cutting weapons. The smash of a war hammer or mace, delivered properly on armor plate would produce not only possible penetration, but the sheer *impact* could break the bones *beneath* the plate. It would be roughly similar to smashing the helmet of a fully equipped and padded football player with a wooden two-by-four; the helmet may not have been penetrated, but tell the now comatose player that the helmet protected him from injury.

In a melee, there is a lot of smashing, hacking and cutting, frequently resulting in an individual receiving blows from several sources at once. The wounds inflicted by these medieval weapons are the worst wounds possible, which they were meant to be. Axe blades, hooks and foot long spear points simply do not do the human body any good when they are manually inserted into it.

So, the next time your favorite hero takes a direct blow from a broadsword and sneers at the "scratch" as a mere inconvenience, or your player-character receives a halberd thrust into the leg, and you merely record "four hit points of damage," recall only the splendid heroic fantasy you're involved in, and be thankful no one yet has factored in the screams, the pain, and the blood that is the reality of hand-to-hand combat. ■■

Weapons: Who Bashed Whom With What?

Swords. In fantasy, as in medieval literature, swords can be divided into two or three main and overlapping categories: named swords, broken swords, and swords which possess supernatural powers.

Most heroes' swords are named: Roland's Durendal, Arthur's Excalibur, Aragorn's Anduril, or Corwin of Amber's Greyswandir. The name distinguishes and ennobles the sword: it has its own identity and very frequently possesses special powers. These powers may take the forms of gemstones which were thought to have magical properties: for example, Excalibur had a great amethyst affixed to its pommel.

Generally, the broken swords are indicators that the men who bear them labor under a geas, or compulsion, or must fulfill a destiny, whether joyous or tragic. In Aragorn's case, the shards of Narsil serve as a constant reminder that he must regain the thrones of Gondor and Arnor. But the broken sword may also indicate a tragic destiny: Scaflоc's Tyrfing in Poul Anderson's *The Broken Sword* and Turin Turambar's Gurthang in *The Silmarillion* are swords which prophesy destruction for their bearers and help bring it about. And Nothung, the sword Siegfried forges in the *Nibelungenlied,* presages the young hero's death, which brings about the Twilight of the Gods.

Swords in fantasy may possess powers beyond their ability to shed blood or shear through things. Elric of Melnibone's Stormbringer and all its brothers are such weapons: according to author Michael Moorcock, Stormbringer is a selfwilled agent of Chaos, ultimately responsible for killing the man who wields it. In Lloyd Alexander's *Chronicles of Prydain,* Taran's sword Drynwyn can only be drawn by a man of noble worth. Any traitor or coward attempting to draw it is immediately incinerated.

Only once is a curved, scimitar-like sword described as a weapon of power. In Lord Dunsany's *The Sword of Welleran,* Rold draws the fabled hero Welleran's sword and, emboldened by it, is able to lead the people of Merimna against attackers.

Knives, Daggers, Poignards, Basilards, Bodkins. At one time or another, almost everyone in fantasy uses some kind of knife to cut dinner, stab an enemy, or swear brotherhood. Perhaps two of the most important cycles for development of a set of rituals revolving around knives are Marion Zimmer Bradley's *Darkover* and Frank Herbert's *Dune.* On Darkover, knives and the skeans commonly tucked into bootsheaths can be bought or taken from an enemy: knives are loaned or exchanged only between *bredin,* or sworn brothers. In *Dune* nobles are trained in a multiplicity of knife-fighting techniques, from the tiny, motion-sensing hunter-seekers to the curved kindhals. Feyd Rautha Harkonnen fights with two blades, one poisoned; the Fremen use crysknives, blades made from teeth of the sandworms.

Axes in medieval literature are most commonly associated with Vikings, with the significant exception of the Green Knight in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,* who carries an enormous ax which he later sharpens for use on Gawain. In the *Lord of the Rings,* Gimli the Dwarf's preferred weapon is the ax.

While the **War Hammer** was a weapon of the latter middle ages, chiefly designed to be effective against heavy plate armor, the hammer itself is of far older ancestry. The Ura hammer, as Norse sagas tell us, was the symbol of Thor. Also called Mjollnir, its passage through the sky created the thunder.

Because of its ability to kill without shedding blood, the **Mace** was considered a weapon especially suitable for a priest who, after all, was not supposed to shed blood. Odo, a Norman bishop who fought at Hastings in 1066 and went on crusade in 1096, used the mace.

Spears, like swords, could be named; in the stories of King Arthur derived from Welsh sources, Arthur's spear was named Ron.

Perhaps the most tragic use of a thrusting weapon was King Mark's use of the **Glaive.** Sneaking up behind Queen Isolde his wife as she sat listening to her lover Tristram, he struck his own nephew to death, says Sir Thomas Malory, with "a trenchant glaive." ■■ *Susan Shwartz*

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Books

Lord Valentine's Castle,
Robert Silverberg, Harper & Row,
$12.95 (hard back)

The contention between devotees of art and money must be about as old as civilization, if only because both are preconditions for civilized life. The pretention of those who decry the shameless lack of taste of the masses is matched only by the cynicism of those who write trash to exploit that lack of taste. As I see it, the goal of a writer should be neither to create incomprehensible great art, for he will then be relegated, like such undeniably great writers as Kafka and Proust, to college literature classes and a small group of introverted literati; nor should his goal be to make "big bux," for his writing will then last about five years, until the acidic paper of modern publishing disintegrates. If the goal of an artist is to put something on paper which others will appreciate, he should presumably seek the widest possible audience for his words; and if he has a wide audience, he should seek to educate it with good writing rather than to exploit it with bad. The best writers are those who do away with the dichotomy between art and money.

Which brings us to Robert Silverberg's *Lord Valentine's Castle.* Silverberg spent many years as one of science fiction's premier writers of trash, and was well-loved. He then underwent a startling metamorphosis, and became one of the genre's most remarkable writers, producing such excellent works as *Thorns* and *The Book of Skulls.* Although he acquired a reputation both inside and outside the tightly-knit science fiction community as a writer of considerable power, his work never sold as well as it should have, nor did the science fiction community welcome him as wholeheartedly as it has writers of more charm but less ability.

Some years ago, Silverberg dramatically announced his retirement from the science fiction "ghetto," and a turn to mainstream fiction. The theory was that the sf audience did not appreciate him adequately, and that a serious writer could not gain acceptance in mainstream circles if he restricted himself to the peculiar genre of science fiction.

But it seems that Silverberg has had second thoughts. We are to be thankful indeed that he did, for *Lord Valentine's Castle* is a superb novel, and arguably Silverberg's best to date. It is also a highly salable novel, one evidently calculated to appeal to the very sf readers who have never accepted Silverberg.

Lord Valentine's Castle is an epic novel, both in the sense that it is long (466 pages) and in the sense that it details the saga of a hero who overcame tremendous problems in order to gain his goal — in this case, the re-establishment of a legitimate government and the saving of the planet Majipoor from tyranny. Silverberg seems to have been very much influenced by Vance. The planet itself has similarities to Vance's *Big Planet.* Silverberg uses Vance's trick of throwing several characters of disparate races and cultures together and seeing how they interact; and Silverberg, as Vance does, holds the readers interest by throwing the characters into contact with different cities and different cultures every fifty pages or so. Silverberg is the more accomplished writer, and has none of Vance's woodenness — and little of Vance's love of wordplay; but save for Silverberg's more seamless style, *Lord Valentine's Castle* might almost have been written by Vance.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the novel is the complete simplicity of its plot. Valentine, his memory wiped by the usurper of his throne, must make his way across three continents, regain his memory, and regain his throne. Though he suffers various misadventures along the way, there are few plot twists. Despite this, the novel is nearly 500 pages long, and is certainly not padded. The reader comes to know Valentine, his companions, and the world and societies of Majipoor in great detail. If anything, the novel is rushed toward the end, as Valentine simply avoids most of the obstacles in his path on the Isle of Sleep, and outwits his opponent on Castle Mount rather rapidly. But despite the detail, despite the novel's dreamy pace, Silverberg never loses his reader, is never boring. To the contrary, *Lord Valentine's Castle* is, in the demeaning argot of Madison Avenue, a page-turner. For the first time since I first read *Dune,* I was unable to put a novel of such size down. I rather expect that *Lord Valentine's Castle* will, like *Dune* or the Amber novels, become something of a cult novel. *Greg Costikyan*

Lost Dorsai, Gordon R. Dickson
Ace Books, $4.95

Gordon Dickson's Childe Cycle describes a future in which mankind has moved off Earth and split into what he calls Splinter Cultures, which he divides into three groups: the Philosophers, or Exotics; the Friendlies, or religion-based societies; and the Warriors, represented by the Dorsai, invincible and loyal mercenary soldiers.

The Dorsai are strong, unable to understand even the idea of defeat. Above all, they are known for their honor and their respect for their contracts and traditions. "I can't do what I shouldn't do," says Ian Graeme, one of the characters of *Lost Dorsai,* "and I must do what I ought to do."

A "lost Dorsai" is not a person who has broken with this honor code; the lost Dorsai of the title is a person who has prepared for a military career and then, strangely, found himself unable to follow through. Such a lost Dorsai is Michael de Sandoval, who serves as a regimental bandmaster in Nahar. Michael is Dorsai-trained and proud of it, but he is also a pacifist living and working among the Naharese, for whom honor is a matter of duels, of flamboyant speeches, and a passion for glory.

A society based on vaguely Hispanic customs, Nahar consists of self-proclaimed aristocrats and landowners and also of an underclass of city-dwellers. Given its macho, incendiary honor code, it is ripe for revolution and knows it. Accordingly, the Count has hired Ian and Kensie Graeme, Dorsai officers, to shape his army into a fighting force.

Ian and Kensie find that the revolution the Count fears is actually being engineered by William of Ceta, a prince who hopes to discredit the Dorsai by engaging their armies in a hopeless battle. They summon help — Amanda Morgan, a Contracts Administrator, who is brought to Nahar by Corunna el Man, a Dorsai whose face has been cruelly mutilated and who wishes only to be left alone.

Amanda and el Man meet Michael and an Exotic, Padma, who is observing Nahar. But el Man is also an observer: of Amanda's love for Ian Graeme, of Kensie's love for Amanda, of the Count's desire to be a *real* aristocrat, and of Michael, who wants to be a Dorsai and yet does not want to kill. And it looks as if, in the upcoming battle of five regiments against the Dorsai officers they have deserted, Michael is either going to have to kill, or watch his friends and fellow Dorsai die.

Each character in *Lost Dorsai* is faced with a similar choice between honor and impulse, but Michael's dilemma, and its solution, is central to *Lost Dorsai* because his actions enable the other principal characters to find answers to their own problems. They will all do what they ought to do, upholding Dorsai honor, which unlike Naharese honor, is internal: not flag-waving and bands, but fidelity to the best within oneself and one's tradition.

Dickson has packed an amazing amount of human pain into *Lost Dorsai.* It is an intense novella, and very finely crafted: each major character is drawn into each other character's pain. This empathy reaches out to the reader too. No one can read this book and remain unmoved by the depths of caring, of honesty, and of human integrity Dickson has created. These Dorsai are admirable, but, in their way, so are the Naharese. They too are loyal to their customs. And Michael, a Dorsai who lives among the Naharese, manages beyond all expectations to be loyal to the customs of both cultures — while remaining true to his pacifism. No one who achieves this can be called lost, Dickson shows us.

Fernando Hernandez has provided some rather dashing illustrations (reprinted from the *Destinies* original), while Sandra Miesel, one of the shrewdest sf critics around, has expanded her "Afterword" to that story. And just to tantalize admirers of Dickson and his Childe Cycle, he has included a segment of his upcoming novel, *The Final Encyclopedia,* in which Dorsai, philosophers, and men of religion will be reconciled. *Susan Shwartz*

Film & Television

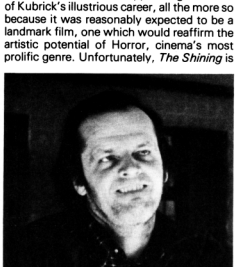
THE SHINING

Director: Stanley Kubrick
Producer: Stanley Kubrick
Screenplay: Stanley Kubrick and Diane Johnson

Cast:

Jack Nicholson ..... Jack Torrance
Shelly Duvall ..... Wendy Torrance
Danny Lloyd ..... Danny Torrance
Scatman Crothers ..... Dick Halloran
Barry Nelson ..... Mr. Ullman

The Shining, Stanley Kubrick's eagerly awaited adaptation of Stephen King's novel, is the director's first film in three years, and given the depth and quality of its flaws, three more years in production would not have helped. It is the most disappointing endeavor of Kubrick's illustrious career, all the more so because it was reasonably expected to be a landmark film, one which would reaffirm the artistic potential of Horror, cinema's most prolific genre. Unfortunately, *The Shining* is



not a modern analogue of early classics like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *Nosferatu.* Those were scary. They tapped the primitive fears which lurk in the hearts of men, their desires, superstitions and doubts. When *The Shining* is not dull, it's funny, but it is never frightening. Granted, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for *The Shining* to live up to the expectations of Kubrick's giddily anxious fans, myself among them, but for the film to prove as bad as it actually is defies imagination.

The novel it is drawn from is a typical exercise in terror from the author of *Carrie* and *Salem's Lot;* it is facile, folksy and efficiently horrific. Pro forma, King introduces a nice family with their fair share of problems, adds some supernatural spice, and forces the tension to mount until the players are driven to a predictable but devastating conclusion. The novel is atmospheric and workmanlike, and it was widely believed that it would provide a perfect vehicle for Kubrick's prodigious talent, that he would add dimension to King's scare story. In fact, the reverse happened. The adaptation undermines the novel's logic and compromises its power.

The film begins with winter closing in on the Overlook, a luxury hotel perched high in the Colorado Rockies. Guests and staff leave the place in the hands of a caretaker named Jack Torrance for the duration of the off-season. Torrance, an out of work teacher and aspiring writer, his wife Wendy and their young son Danny will spend four chilling months at the Overlook cut off from the outside world by twenty feet of snow. Jack gleefully anticipates months of solitude wherein he can draft the Great American Novel, but his son Danny, possessed of extraordinary psychic powers (the "Shining" of the title) has premonitions of grave danger. And they are justified. The Overlook is haunted, inhabited by the same malevolent spirits which drove Torrance's predecessor to butcher his family and kill himself.

The film skips ahead one month to the first snowstorm of the season — telephone lines drop and the Overlook's spooks crawl out of the woodwork. Danny is visited by the twin daughters of the last caretaker, then attacked by the dread ghost of Room 237. He is so badly frightened that his personality is subverted by that of his imaginary friend Tony, the protective personification of his psychic powers. Jack Torrance, egged on by the hotel's demons, sets out to kill his wife and son. There is an extended chase and a little blood letting as the film and its protagonist limp to an unsatisfying finish.

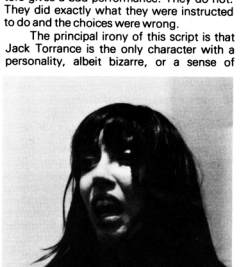
Kubrick dominates every aspect of his films — writer, producer, director, a gifted cinematographer and editor. He is so zealous of complete control that he refuses to turn his films over to a composer for an original score. Instead, he selects accompanying music from existing compositions, a pattern he established with *2001* and has since maintained. His attention to detail is scrupulous, his passion for work legendary. A perfectionist, he required as many as 87 takes for some shots in this film. In viewing *The Shining,* we must assume that we are seeing exactly what Kubrick wished us to see; therefore, he is uniquely responsible for all its flaws.

Unquestionably, *The Shining* was intended to be a horror film, one which would inspire, as the dictionary says, a shuddering fear or abhorrence. It does not, nor is it stimulating or even entertaining.

Jack Nicholson plays Jack Torrance, and he looks suspicious, nay, deeply disturbed from the film's opening frame until its conclusion. He never seems comfortable with his wife nor she with him, and his son is smart enough not to trust him for a minute. There is never any doubt that he is up to no good; it is simply a question of how long it will take him to get around to it. When he fails to kill his wife on his first try, a sarcastic spook delivers some of the film's strangest dialogue — "We (meaning all the spirits of the Overlook) don't think your heart is in this, Jack." It's odd that the spooks should have any reservations regarding Jack's enthusiasm — the audience certainly doesn't. They've believed in him all along. Kubrick never allows Nicholson a sincere momeht against which to play the agony of his implied subversion by evil. His motives for mayhem seem to be completely his own, though not very clearly drawn. He is not possessed by the Overlook, he is realized by it.

Shelly Duvall is required to play Wendy Torrance as a frowsy half-wit, innocent of any wrong doing but decidedly unappealing. She whines and shuffles, she's muddled and ineffectual — in short, spending months trapped alone with her is the most terrifying thought *The Shining* has to offer. Danny Lloyd is a talented child actor but his character is immobilized by fear very early in the film and never fully recovers. Scatman Crothers plays himself playing Overlook chef Dick Halloran. Barry Nelson gives a genuinely silly performance as the unctuous hotel manager, Mr. Ullman. Not that any of the actors gives a bad performance. They do not. They did exactly what they were instructed to do and the choices were wrong.

The principal irony of this script is that Jack Torrance is the only character with a personality, albeit bizarre, or a sense of



humor. Jack is, in fact, hysterically funny at the most inappropriate times — while splintering a door with an ax to get at his wife, he calls out, "Wendy, I'm home!" Demolishing a second door he says, "Heeeere's Johnny!" Both funny lines, but do they belong in the middle of one of the film's most active sequences? Humor is a standard device in horror films, a welcome break after one rough sequence in anticipation of another, but misplaced jokes can destroy tension instead of relieving it. Many of the jokes in *The Shining,* and there are many, lead the viewer to fear Jack's passion less and admire his nimble wit and rakish smile more.

That *The Shining* is not a faithful adaptation of the novel was not necessarily a mistake. Unfortunately, it is a de facto mistake. The film makes no attempt to replace the elements of the novel it so blithe-

ly discards, the very elements which gave the original its strength. King cites Danny's awesome power as the catalyst which liberated the Overlook's spirits. The manifestation of that power, Tony, is a shadowy figure hidden deep inside the boy, a faraway voice which approaches in times of danger, protective and mature. But the film represents Tony as Danny's wiggling finger and gives him the voice of Froggy the Gremlin. Far from powerful, he seems a little foolish and is certainly an underdeveloped character. King carefully establishes the hotel's checkered past. He does this during the month the film omits entirely. He includes scenes of Jack discovering a cache of old newspapers which document the evil goings on at the Overlook. These are the very things which kindle Jack's obsession with the place and they are left out of the film entirely. But the most significant omission is the sympathetic side of Jack Torrance. In the novel, Jack is a man with a drinking problem which had been accompanied by violent episodes, but his affection for and devotion to his family is clearly established. The good side is in constant conflict with its opposite and with the Overlook. Therein lies the strength of the original and the failure of the adaptation. Kubrick never troubles to establish a good side for Torrance, effectively removing his principal source of intellectual or spiritual conflict. He offers only a hackneyed physical conflict — a poor substitute.

The Shining is well photographed. Cinematographer John Alcott makes extensive use of the Steadi-Cam, a device which eliminates most of the wobble of hand-held photography. By doing away with cumbersome dollys, it allows the director to choreograph longer, more complex shots. But in this film its primary function is to track fleeing figures through hallways and hedgerows, shots reminiscent of the famous trench sequence in Kubrick's *Paths of Glory*, but far less effective.

Modern industrial architecture exposes the machinery of a building — ducts, pipes, vents and supports — and turns them into design elements. *The Shining* lays open to view all the devices of horror and suspense — endless eerie music, odd camera angles, a soundtrack of an interminably pounding heart, hatchets and hunts. The result is shallow, self-conscious and dull. Read the book. *Vincent Misiano*

TELEVISION

The past television season has been, at best, disappointing for those interested in science fiction and fantasy. The three major networks trashed their way through the genre with *Buck Rogers* and *Galactica 80* (in which the *Battlestar* bozos finally reach Earth but don't know what to do when they get there); the long awaited "blockbusters," *The Martian Chronicles* and *Brave New World*, popped weakly on the small screen and were noteworthy only by virtue of the magnitude of the gap between their promise and their actual performance.

The one bright spot of the season was PBS' *Lathe of Heaven*, a remarkably faithful translation of Ursual K. Le Guin's novel. Produced on a shoe-string budget, the telefilm outshone the mega-buck films, such as *Star Trek — The Motion Picture*, both in storyline and imagination of production. PBS will introduce a new program next fall which could be the most popular series of the year — a combination of fiction and science.

Cosmos will be a thirteen part series devoted to astronomy, space exploration, and, more importantly, speculation. Hosted by the distinguished Dr. Carl Sagan, *Cosmos* will premiere on Sunday, September 28. The series will cover the 15 billion year history of the universe, the recent spacecraft missions to the planets, and possible communication with extraterrestrials.



Dr. Carl Sagan

In addition to exciting the imagination of the audience, *Cosmos* will offer spectacular visual effects, created by *Star Wars* wizards Robert Blalack and Jamie Shourt. Viewers will be able to join Sagan in a spacecraft that zooms across the length of the visible universe, descends through the hellish atmosphere of Venus, plunges through the rings of Saturn, and visits the center of an exploding galaxy. The series will not be confined solely to outer space; it will also cover such topics as Hindu cosmology, plate techtonics, the origins of life, and the deciphering of Egyptian hieroglyphics.

Cosmos will not be limited to just the facts about our universe. It will examine many of the "what-if's" we ask about ourselves and our cosmos. What if we contact aliens? What if our sun dies? What if the library at Alexandria had not been destroyed? The speculative answers to such questions should provide viewers a satisfactory mix of fiction and science. *Ares* will review selected installments of the series in the fall. *Michael Moore*

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Media

Now that *Star Wars* is here to stay, especially since the box office receipts for *The Empire Strikes Back* have already totaled over $50 million, more episodes are in the making. The ultimate plan is to make nine films over twenty years, broken down into three trilogies. Currently, we are in the midst of the middle trilogy, dealing with Luke Skywalker. The third segment of this trilogy, *Revenge of the Jedi*, is set to begin preproduction in January, with Gary Kurtz as producer. The next project will be the first trilogy — the Clone Wars — covering the early lives of Luke's father, Darth Vader and Ben Kenobi.

The National Public Radio network plans to broadcast a radio dramatization of *Star Wars*, scheduled tentatively for October, 1980.

Lucas will also be busy with *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, collaborating with Spielberg. Production should get underway in 1981.

The Disney Studies are moving heavily into both science fiction and fantasy for the next year or so. *Dragon Slayer* will feature Sir Ralph Richardson as a 6th Century English sorceror, who helps his apprentice in an attempt to kill the you know what. (I don't think Mickey Mouse got the part.) *Knights of Eden* will begin work in 1981. Directed by Jerry Courthand with the screenplay by Robert Malcolm Young, the film is based on Westbrook Claridge's book about a hero summoned by an alien wizard to battle an evil alien king. The special effects will be given heavy priority. Disney's third attempt in the genre will be *Time Warp*, written by Steve Hayes and Brian Trenchard-Smith; in the story earth time travellers meet and battle a rival group from another universe through the past and present.

Scanners is scheduled to appear in January, 1981. David Cronenberg is the writer-director of the Avco Embassy $5 million release. Patrick McGoohan stars in the story of a new race of 248 humans found scattered around the globe; their telekinetic abilities are tapped by factions on the planet, one for good and the other for, you guessed it, evil.

Anyone remember Stella Star from *Star Crash*? She returns to the screen in a sequel, called *Star Patrol*. This made-in-Italy $2 million opus will be scripted and directed by Lewis Coates (or Luigi Cozzi).

Isaac Asimov's *I, Robot* is scheduled for 1982 as a Warner Brothers release. Irvin (*The Empire Strikes Back*) Kershner is slated as director, John Mantley as producer, and Harlan Ellison, and Eddie and Millie Lewis as screenwriters.

George (*Night of the Living Dead, Dawn of the Dead*) Romero fans will be happy to note that the master horror filmmaker will complete his zombie trilogy with *Day of the Dead* after he completes his current project *Knights*. *Howard Barasch*

Games

Chivalry and Sorcery

Designers: Ed Simbalist and Wilf Backhaus
Mail order and retail sales
Fantasy Games Unlimited, $10.

The fantasy role-playing field, plagued by rules that are dubious pastiches of twisted legend and pseudo-medieval background, can apparently accommodate at least one game which pays serious attention to its premise. *Chivalry and Sorcery* is placed in France of 1170, with a liberal dollop of magic let loose on the countryside. The authors present a carefully researched account of medieval living conditions, coupled with fantastic creatures and magic derived from legend and ancient grimoires. This work is an estimable fantasy sourcebook, which is fortunate, since it has definite failings as a game.

C&S is the joint creation of several members of a Canadian gaming club, who did not find the previously published FRP games suited to their (somewhat eclectic) tastes. At first, the designers began writing rules for their own use, but then, following a long tradition of amateur hobbyists turned professionals, sought a publisher who could expose a goodly number of people to their FRP alternative. The fledgling Fantasy Games Unlimited was one of the few companies to recognize the potential of such a game, and a deal was struck for publication in 1977. Both parties have since prospered under the arrangement; the knowledgeable FRP fans have praised many of the concepts embodied in the design, and Fantasy Games Unlimited (FGU) has been churning out supplements at the normal frantic pace for the genre.

The hallmark of a game created by talented amateurs is usually erratic brilliance, and *C&S* is no exception. Innovative ideas may be found in most every facet of the rules, and every subsequently published FRP game owes a debt to either *Dungeons and Dragons* or *C&S*. The game concentrates on individual and mass combat, social orders and magic, each of which receives detailed treatment. The basis for each rule becomes clear as it is applied, or by the reading of the accompanying commentary. Those are the strong points of the design. The worst problem arises when the game is actually played — it can move as awkwardly as an octopus on dry land.

The emphasis here is not on role-playing, in that character interaction is only a minor part of the rules. *C&S* is more a *simulation* of European fantasy than anything else, and this bias tinges every subsystem of the game. The designers seem more concerned with having the player (reader?) understand the subject about which the game was designed, rather than giving them an enjoyable game. There is nothing inherently wrong with such an approach. However, there is a very thin dividing line between learning tool and overly technical simulation, and *C&S* treads perilously close to the wrong side of this line.

The new player should learn from another experienced with the game, for this is the hardest of the FRP systems to learn. One begins, as usual, with the generation of a character. It is a privilege to be non-human (and have all the attendant advantages), since no more than one-fifth of the player characters will fall into that category. Each player must determine over fifteen indices for his character, which include, in addition to the standard characteristics, precise height, weight, Personal Combat and Military Ability Factors. The values for the characteristics are somewhat interdependent, so that a tall character's weight will be increased to reflect his greater frame, strength will affect Body Points, etc. Players may even handicap their characters with psychological problems, including dromophobia, which we are informed is fear of crossing a road.

The values for most of the status indices are generated mainly by random die-rolls. The important rolls result in a number from 1 to 20 or 100. The old imbalance in which well-rolled characters are substantially superior to their less fortunate brethren is inevitable with this system. Furthermore, the profusion of numbers associated with the characteristics (for instance, no less than ten numbers are attached to the Personal Combat Factor) make it extremely difficult for a complete character record sheet to be a viable proposition. There is just too much information to cram into both sides of a sheet of paper.

The fault which lies with the random nature of character generation can almost be excused for the fascinating Social Class rules. *C&S* deserves all the credit for introducing the first social system; it is hoped that the best of the future role-playing games will continue in this direction. A character's parental status may range from the bastard daughter (a bit chauvinistic, but this is, after all, the Middle Ages) of a serf to a member of the royal family. The non-human races (e.g., elves) have their own social ladder, which is abbreviated by comparison to the human status chain. A character may effectively be reduced below his station by being a widow, disgraced, or the target of royal displeasure. The effect of a character's status translates to a Basic Influence Factor, which is ultimately useful in gaining royal favors.

The rules begin to bog down as they throw enough initialisms and formulae at the reader to make him groggy. The rules are replete with BIF's, MKL's, PMF's, etc., and think nothing of asking the players to conduct four-step equations. One must have a calculator and long memory to get to the land of sword and sorcery. *C&S* would be much improved if Game Assistance Programs could be provided for its gamesmasters (along with the microcomputer on which to run them). Still, there is no getting around the fact that many of the subsystems are "dirty" where smoother mechanics would have sufficed.

The reader is then treated to a panoramic journey through medieval life. The first stop is crime and punishment. Smuggling merits death by hanging, poisoning death by burning at the stake, and cannibalism death by being thrown to wild dogs. And if the bailiffs don't get you, the churchmen will. Fortunately, the authors have seen fit to relax the restrictions for witchcraft; a character can practice magic, as long as he does not consort with the evil powers. The Courtly Love section details how a lady may be won by force of arms from a knight of dubious character, how all nobly born ladies are assumed to be gentle, kind and good, and how (gadzooks!) a knight and his lady may actually fall in love. The reader, paling by this time, discovers that tournaments are a good excuse for knights to maim each other for the purposes of personal honor. No one comes away with the illusion that the High Middle Ages was a romantic era.

The rules settle down to the part at which they are best. The research on heraldic arms and orders (e.g., the Chivalric Order of the Most Gallant Companions of the Golden Spear), medieval structures and organization for battle is thorough and well-organized. A digression into massed combat is really a set of miniature rules, which has little relation to the actions most player-characters are likely to undertake. The individual combat system is again miniatures-based, and is essentially an elaborate extension of the *D&D* combat system. I can vouchsafe that it does work, but the players had best know the system well if they do not wish a single combat to become the whole expedition.

Despite a gallant attempt on the part of the rules editor, the disorganization of the rules presentation begins to catch up with the game. The index accompanying the game is quite comprehensive, but rambles on in the most unlikely directions. Finding a desired bit of information is an exercise in memory ("Thieves...hmm...try around page 50.") and in logic ("If this is castle construction, then bringing an army covertly into an area should follow."). For all their faults, the rules compare favorably to *D&D;* remember that in the country of the blind, the one-eyed man is king.

Magic merits the full treatment. The designers do seem to become aware of their excesses, for they present a "fast magic system." The faster system is not as difficult as swimming through molasses in January, but it is still sticky to wade through. If the reader forgets that he intends to play the game, and pretends he has bought *Jane's All the World's Magicks,* he should be fully satisfied.

The philosophy behind the magic systems implies that mages are solely interested in the pursuit of their art — a laudable goal, to be sure, but not a realistic one in light of the habits of most fantasy role-players. The dominant age group in FRP gaming today is the 10 to 17 year olds, and the only way those people will be restrained is directly by the rules. Since *C&S* attempts simulation of medieval magic, the most powerful enchantments must be performed by ritual, which does tone down some of the battle magic. In the end, the magic user reigns supreme as a character class, no matter how many restrictions are imposed upon him.

While the effects of magic are not of great interest, the method by which they are

achieved is. A mage draws his powers from his casting mode, which ranges from shamanistic to drug trance to cabalistic (sadly, there are no rules interfacing the Talmud with such magic). There are secret orders into which the prospective magician will enter, dependent upon his mode; presumably, anyone slimy enough to practice magic must keep the nature of his activities quiet. Only clerics, it appears, can openly state the nature and source of the power for their conjurations. They also carry the threat of interdict or excommunication in order to induce widespread co-operation.

The key to enchanting an item properly is reducing it to the point where it has no resistance to magic. Then it is malleable to the spells of the mage, who would have to "subdue" its anti-magical properties otherwise. The players are supplied with a compendium of the most common "historical" magic items, which belong chiefly in the provinces of alchemists and artificers. For those who wish to vend souls in return for infernal thaumaturgy, black magic is in full gory glory and the demons of the Lesser Key of Solomon are available for compacts. It is all intriguing reading, if not necessarily good gaming material.

Characters and monsters are treated alike: both gain abilities by achieving levels. Therefore, the rough abilities of a monster cannot be fixed within a narrow span by the players (a common problem in other FRP games), and players can have monster characters. If one reads the rules aright, one finds it is possible for a basilisk character to also be a Knightly Champion. Such an anomaly should not be expected, except in a campaign run as a medieval equivalent of the *Gong Show.*

The role-playing field has acknowledged its debt to *C&S* for providing many original concepts. No FRP system has since matched the quantity and quality of its technical system design. However, *C&S* is a poor game for all but the serious devotee of fantasy. It is a worthy purchase for he who wishes a reference work from which to authenticate FRP rules; it is a terrible investment for he who wishes one FRP system upon which to base a campaign.

The graphics of the package are in keeping with its Dark Ages theme. The text consists of reduced reproductions of typewritten pages, and the illustrations are fair to mediocre. The use of Old English lettering for every rules heading is a nice touch. The quite reasonable price of the game will increase when, Scott Bizar, head of FGU, informs me, the rules are typeset.

Adventures in Fantasy

Designers: Dave Arneson and Richard Snider
Mail order and retail sales
Excalibre Games, Inc., $20

While TSR is busy putting out its 31 flavors of *Dungeons and Dragons,* Dave Arneson, one of the original co-authors, wants to make sure that he does not miss out on the fun (or profits, but that's the subject of a lawsuit in progress). The design of *Adventures in Fantasy* is, in every way, a direct lineal descendant of *D&D,* and is, in many respects, superior to its forebear. The resemblance unfortunately applies to the massive disorganization and frequent incoherency of the rules. Given the success of *D&D,* perhaps this is a good marketing strategy; it does, however, make the rules slightly indigestible.

The artwork seems to be a cross between EC Comics and Big Little Books. Thr lurid cover depicts a relative of the Green Goblin (Spiderman's old foe) being waylaid by Jack and Jill in medieval garb. The three books (three seems to be a mystical number for FRP games) are red, blue and green, as is the print inside. For those who may be unaware, reading an entire book in red print is akin to staring at the sun for a few minutes.

The rules start at the logical place, character generation, and then begin a merry romp through a hodge-podge of subsystems. Within the text, several rules are labeled optional, though the discerning reader will probably dispute the designers' choices. An adventure of sorts is given, but it is in lieu of sufficient instructions for adventure preparation.

Each of the characteristics is rolled using percentile dice, so the high roller is *homo superior* once again. A method for determining the character's age and death chance is provided; I assume that one must check whether his character has died before proceeding onward. If the character is indeed alive, the player must determine how many years of education the character has achieved. These characteristics are applied to gain the character a selection of the most important skills. The concept is excellent, though cluttered by the first of many overly long formulas (take up thy trusty calculator once more).

After a quick passage through a very short price list and a throw-away section on castle construction, we settle down to the campaign. The gamesmaster is required to keep track of a detailed calendar (if this is the Month of the Basilisk, this must be Middle Earth), which does not seem to have much purpose, as of yet (on the very first page, we are warned of the forthcoming issuance of at least five supplements). The layout of the underground is similar to *D&D,* except that there are no demarcations to determine distance travelled, only a scale included in the key. Unless you enjoy working with a millimetric rule, use the former mapping system.

The great outdoors is on occasion mapped on a hexgrid. The basic encounter system is again derived from *D&D,* though there are quite a few improvements. Of exceptional interest are the routines for sweep patterns and search.

Rumor has it that Mr. Arneson was responsible for the design of the highly playable *D&D* combat system; he has surpassed himself in *Adventures in Fantasy* (*AIF*). The body type (e.g., human, snake) of the attacker is compared to that of the defender, to give a base percentage chance of a hit. The die used to determine any damage is variable; the player rolls to determine which type he uses if his character strikes his foe. Weapons are incidental to combat, though terrain has great effect. Each species has an Average Hit Point value, which does not increase easily, thus making constant engagement in combat a foolhardy thing.

The Experience Point rules are unbelievably cluttered. If one slays four trolls, four separate six-step calculations must be performed to determine the net number of Experience Points, presuming no one else aided in those combats. Invent a replacement system here, unless you have developed a fondness for double-entry bookkeeping. The rules by which Social Status and Reputation are increased are comparatively simple; one wonders whether the designers felt the most successful characters should be exalted braggarts.

The text suffers from poor proofreading. Even more irritating is a manhandling of English that usually only occurs when writings are inexpertly translated from another language. Consider the first sentence in the magic rules: "Master you are apprenticed to must be higher than level **8 EIGHT**."

Despite occasional lapses into pidgin English, a good magic system crystallizes in the mind of the reader. The mage's Intelligence determines the number of Magic Points he receives, which is modified by his level. Each spell has a point cost attached to it, and is aligned. This is the Moorcockian system, wherein one can be either Lawful, Neutral or Chaotic. Once a mage chooses one alignment spell, he is of that alignment (there are a set of common non-aligned spells). The spells will fit comfortably into the *D&D* system, and are serviceable on their own. Saving throws (i.e., the ability to avoid the effects of magic) are determined mainly by the number of Magic Points invested in a spell.

A very strange sorcerous combat system must be used whenever mages meet in combat. The mages choose whether they wish to kill or subdue their opponents, form a mental shield betwixt themselves, and then engage in a matrix-resolved combat system. The designers recover their senses when they expound upon Faerry (*sic*) magic. The Faerry Folk derive their power from songs and runes, which are basically spells with different restrictions.

A segue leads us into the community patterns of the Faerry Folk. This begins as the usual "if there are 100 elves, there is at least one elven major magician," but improves to give a bit of insight into the ethos and habits of these peoples. Then, in one of the bewildering bridges between rules to which the reader is becoming accustomed, elementals are classified.

The authors chose only creatures of myth for their monster descriptions. Even the Nemean Lion and the Stymphalian Birds make appearances, which shows an adherence to the legend bordering on monomania. The data associated with each monster is slight, which is excellent from a play point of view. The design shows its roots once more when covering magic items, which include the infamous intelligent swords.

AIF would seem to have many things against purchasing it. The price is high, the graphics are terrible, the rules are worse, and many of the systems are overly complicated. However, when played, the game is a lot of fun. Of course, some of the burdensome rules must be streamlined, but that work is

GAMES RATING CHART

SCIENCE FICTION & SCIENCE FANTASY

Title	Pub	Pub Date	Price	Accep	%	Comp	Time	Soli
1. Traveller	GDW	7/77	12	7.5	39	6.2	5	5.5
2. Imperium	GDW	12/77	10	7.3	32	6.1	6	2.5
3. Creature...Sheboygan	SPI	4/79	4	7.1	63	5.0	1	6.5
4. GEV	MGC	78	3	7.1	41	5.0	2	6.5
5. Freedom in the Galaxy	SPI	6/79	20	7.1	36	7.0	7	5.5
6. Ogre	MGC	5/77	3	7.0	52	4.8	1	6.5
7. Starfleet Battles	TFG	11/79	13	7.0	23	na	na	na
8. Cosmic Encounters	EP	76	12	7.0	23	3.5	1	2.0
9. Dark Nebula	GDW	2/80	6	6.8	11	5.6	2	2.5
10. Battlefleet: Mars	SPI	4/77	15	6.8	32	6.8	6	3.0
11. John Carter of Mars	SPI	5/79	20	6.7	32	6.0	4	5.5
12. Stellar Conquest	MGC	2/75	13	6.7	22	5.8	6	3.0
13. Objective: Moscow	SPI	3/78	27	6.5	18	5.0	30	5.0
14. Triplanetary	GDW	9/73	10	6.5	12	5.7	2	4.6
15. Villains & Vigillantes	FGUI	na	6	6.5	5	na	na	na
16. Snapshot	GDW	6/79	8	6.3	19	5.3	1	4.0
17. After the Holocaust	SPI	1/77	14	6.3	22	7.5	7	7.0
18. Mayday	GDW	2/78	5	6.2	21	4.9	2	4.0
19. Starship Troopers	AH	7/76	15	6.2	53	5.0	2	3.5
20. Starweb	FB	76	10	6.2	12	5.5	na	na
21. Invasion: America	SPI	12/75	18	6.1	30	5.5	6	4.5
22. Bloodtree Rebellion	GDW	11/79	13	6.1	28	6.0	5	2.5
23. Belter	GDW	8/79	12	6.0	11	5.8	4	2.5
24. Starforce	SPI	9/74	12	6.0	45	6.0	4	4.5
25. Outreach	SPI	11/76	12	6.0	36	6.0	5	4.0
26. Dune	AH	6/79	15	6.0	25	na	na	na
27. Star Fall	YP	8/79	13	5.9	8	na	na	na
28. War in the Ice	SPI	1/79	12	5.9	26	6.8	5	4.5
29. Star Soldier	SPI	1/77	12	5.9	27	7.1	2	3.5
30. Godsfire	MGC	79	16	5.9	14	7.1	8	1.5
31. Warp War	MGC	77	3	5.9	37	4.5	1	5.0
32. Time War	YP	8/79	13	5.9	8	na	na	na
33. Starfire	TFG	6/79	4	5.7	8	na	na	na
34. StarGate	SPI	4/79	4	5.7	30	5.5	2	6.0
35. Olympica	MGC	na	3	5.6	24	5.5	1	2.0
36. Space Quest	TYR	na	na	5.6	5	na	na	na
37. Ice War	MGC	78	3	5.6	23	5.0	2	6.5
38. Lords of Middle Sea	TC	7/78	10	5.6	6	na	na	na
39. WorldKiller	SPI	3/80	6	5.6	59	3.5	1	4.0
40. Double Star	GDW	3/78	10	5.6	15	5.5	5	5.0
41. Cerberus	TFG	6/79	4	5.6	7	na	na	na
42. Alpha Omega	AH	7/77	15	5.5	11	na	na	na
43. Chitin: 1	MGC	77	3	5.4	28	5.8	1	3.5
44. Vector 3	SPI	4/79	4	5.3	30	5.8	2	3.0
45. Titan Strike	SPI	4/79	4	5.3	29	6.0	2	5.5
46. Gamma World	TSR	78	10	5.3	21	na	na	na
47. Hot Spot	MGC	79	3	5.3	12	5.9	1	2.5
48. Starships & Spaemen	FGUI	na	7	5.3	8	na	na	na
49. Black Hole	MGC	78	3	5.2	23	5.0	2	6.5
50. Rivets	MGC	79	3	5.2	30	5.2	1	2.1
51. Invasion of Air Eaters	MGC	79	3	5.2	18	5.6	1	2.4
52. Strange New Worlds	BL	na	10	5.1	6	na	na	na
53. Asteroid Zero-Four	TFG	6/79	4	5.0	9	na	na	na
54. Metamorphosis/Alpha	TSR	76	5	5.0	23	6.0	9	1.0
55. Star Fighter	BL	na	na	4.7	5	na	na	na
56. Star Probe	TSR	na	na	4.4	12	6.0	5	2.5
57. Annihilator/One World	MGC	79	3	4.4	18	2.5	1	1.5
58. Holy War	MGC	79	3	4.3	16	5.5	1	2.5
59. Star Lord	FB	9/72	5	4.3	5	6.0	4	4.5
60. Rift Trooper	AW	7/76	7	4.3	5	na	na	na
61. Starquest	OSG	na	4	4.1	7	na	na	na
62. Colony Delta	FGUI	na	12	4.1	4	na	na	na
63. Dixie	SPI	1/76	5	3.7	32	5.5	2	6.0
64. Formalhaut II	AW	na	7	3.6	6	na	na	na
65. Arms Race	DC	na	na	3.4	3	na	na	na
66. Quazar	EG	76	12	3.1	5	6.0	12	2.0
67. Stalk-1	C-C	4/76	12	3.0	2	na	na	na
68. Warriors of Dark Star	TSR	na	na	2.6	3	na	na	na
69. War of Star Slavers	AW	na	13	2.3	4	na	na	na
70. IT	DC	na	na	2.0	7	na	na	na

FANTASY

Title	Pub	Pub Date	Price	Accep	%	Comp	Time	Soli
1. Runequest	TC	8/78	12	7.4	16	7.0	7	1.0
2. Melee	MGC	79	3	7.0	52	5.3	1	6.5
3. War of the Ring	SPI	11/77	18	7.0	58	6.1	6	4.5
4. Wizard	MGC	79	3	6.9	39	5.8	1	6.0
5. White Bear/Red Moon	TC	11/76	10	6.7	16	5.0	3	6.0
6. Chivalry & Sorcery	FGUI	na	10	6.7	27	7.0	6	1.0
7. Dungeons & Dragons	TSR	12/74	10	6.7	62	6.5	5	1.0
8. Death Test	MGC	79	3	6.6	35	5.8	1	1.0
9. Divine Right	TSR	79	10	6.5	18	5.2	4	6.0
10. Swords & Sorcery	SPI	7/78	18	6.5	35	6.0	3	5.0
11. Bushido	TYR	na	10	6.5	7	6.8	5	1.0
12. Nomad Gods	TC	5/77	10	6.4	12	5.2	3	6.0
13. DeathMaze	SPI	11/79	4	6.1	40	5.1	2	5.0
14. Tunnels & Trolls	FB	75	8	6.1	18	6.6	5	1.0
15. Gondor	SPI	11/77	4	6.0	38	5.5	4	4.5
16. Empire of Petal Throne	TSR*	6/77	25	5.9	21	7.4	9	1.0
17. Sauron	SPI	11/77	4	5.8	39	6.6	4	5.5
18. Sticks and Stones	MGC	78	3	5.7	23	5.0	2	6.5
19. Wizard's Quest	AH	79	15	5.6	21	4.5	2	2.0
20. Demons	SPI	11/79	4	5.6	32	5.2	2	7.0
21. Elric	TC	7/77	5	5.5	9	4.5	3	3.0
22. Sorcerer	SPI	10/75	12	5.5	36	6.0	2	6.0
23. Monsters Monsters	MGC	76	4	5.5	15	6.0	9	1.0
24. Beast Lord	YP	6/79	15	5.4	6	7.0	5	4.0
25. Stomp!	TC	11/79	3	5.4	10	na	na	na
26. Lords & Wizards	FGUI	na	12	5.3	8	na	na	na
27. King Arthur's Knights	TC	7/78	10	5.1	6	na	na	na
28. Spellmaker	BL	na	na	5.0	7	na	na	na
29. Dragon Lords	FGUI	na	na	4.9	4	na	na	na
30. Magic Realm	AH	6/79	15	4.8	35	7.0	3	1.0
31. Bunnies & Burrows	FGUI	na	6	4.7	8	na	na	na
32. Lankhmar	TSR	8/76	12	4.5	12	na	na	na
33. War of the Wizards	TSR	na	na	4.5	10	na	na	na
34. Battle of 5 Armies	DSR	na	na	4.4	9	na	na	na
35. Venerable Destruction	EG	na	6	4.1	4	na	na	na
36. Warlocks & Warriors	TSR	77	7	3.4	6	na	na	na
37. Atlantis	EG	7/76	4	3.3	6	3.0	1	1.0

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS: AH = Avalon Hill; AW = Attack Wargaming; BL = Battleline; C-C = C-in-C Metalcasting; DC = Dave Casciano Co.; EG = Excalibre Games; EP = Eon Products; FB = Flying Buffalo Inc.; FGUI = Fantasy Games Unlimited Inc., GDW = Game Designers' Workshop; GG = Grimoire Games; GS = GameScience; JG = Judges Guild; MGC = Metagaming Concepts; OSG = Operational Studies Group; SPI = Simulations Publications Inc.; TC = The Chaosium; TFG = Task Force Games; TSR = Tactical Studies Rules; TYR = Tyr Gamemakers; YP = Yaquinto Publications. *Acceptability Rating* is the game's overall popularity. % *Played* is the percentage of readers who have played the game within the last twelve months. *Complexity Rating* is the relative complexity of the game on a scale of 1 (simplest) to 9. *Solitaire* is the game's solitaire playability.

*Has been taken over by GameScience.

not excessive. Finally, the designers promise to be flexible with their game, while TSR is not with *D&D,* and this bodes well for the future of *AIF.*

Mythology

Designer and Developer: J. Stephen Peek
Mail order and retail sales
Yaquinto Publications, Inc., $14

The very attractive visual package has Charlton Heston (or a facsimile thereof) as Zeus staring into space from his lightning-limned throne. If one is a sucker for Greek mythology, like this reviewer, the game is already sold. Inspection of the interior reveals nothing as eye-catching as the cover, but nothing overly disappointing either.

It is about this time that the inconsistencies strike the purchaser. It is a Game of Adventure in the Age of Heros (*sic*) which, on the East Coast, implies something to do with grinder sandwiches. The world is satisfactorily flat, and done in a Greek motif, but not enough attention has been paid to detail. And if errors of placement are not enough, we have, among other misspellings, "Phoecinia" and a "Cornacopia." Irritating things like this do not interfere with the play of the game, but they do make suspension of disbelief a wee bit more difficult.

Each player represents one of the major Greek gods. They will attempt to gain control of the heroes, heroines and monsters on the map, who will be maneuvered to garner treasure and glory for their patron deities. Each god has an allotment of Power Points, which must be used to bring the counters on the board under his (or her) control. The object of the game is to accrue more Glory Points than any other deity in play (Zeus, unless the optional rules are used, is a neutral recipient of Glory Points).

Two components provide the game with a strength and a weakness: cards, which always enhance players' enjoyment, and the obligatory pad for a Yaquinto game. Each god has a corresponding card, which details his abilities. On the back of the god cards is a prayer and sacrifice matrix (another Yaquinto standard), which is only used as an optional rule. The other cards are divided into three parts: Gods, which reflect the influences of minor deities of the Greek pantheon; Events, which may be played to allow the major gods more freedom of reign; and Oracles, which declare that certain accomplishments bring a hefty Glory Point bonus. The pad, which is required to plot the expenditure of Power Points for the coming turn, is only a minor inconvenience.

The game is broken down into basic and advanced rules. The basic rules are presumably intended to appeal to those who are unfamiliar (and therefore afraid) of wargame rules. The basic game is not the travesty that its counterpart in *War of the Ring* is, but is clearly not the best part of the rules. The advanced rules are not terribly complicated for a wargame, and can be learned in about thirty minutes. The rules are cleaner than previous Yaquinto efforts, there being only a few minor omissions and contradictions (one rule declares that never more and never less than 10 Power Points can be expended in a given turn, and the very next rule tells us that Power Points not expended in a turn are lost. Tsk! Tsk!)

The choice of rules to include is very good. The Fates cannot ever be influenced by the gods, magic is tastefully abstracted, etc. Two rules have somewhat dubious names: Hercules and the Special Bonehead rule and the Hero Helpers (could be monosodium glutamate for those grinders). The optional rules are, if anything, better than the standard rules, including a provision for Zeus as a player (highly recommended) and the Lesser Evils.

Steve Peek has proven once again that he is capable of original and appropriate design. He also has shown either an inability or a disinclination to properly develop this game. When the nice pieces of the game are fitted together, and it is played, *Mythology* falls apart. Also, the approach to the subject matter is Classic Comics rather than *Bulfinch's Mythology* (special bonehead rule indeed!), which may be jarring to some who take Greek legend seriously. If you can find yourself an oracle who knows the secret of how to make this a better game, pick it up.

Eric Goldberg

Nota Bene

Before the *Ares* 2 review of *Magic Realm* could be written, Richard Hamblen, the designer, was asked to respond to

[continued on page 39]

Feedback

Reader Survey, Ares nr. 4

Your opinions directly affect the editorial content of *Ares* Magazine. We invite you to participate in this, our regular survey of readers.

How to use the Feedback Response Card: After you've finished reading this issue of *Ares*, please read the Feedback questions below, and give us your answers by writing the answer-numbers on the card in the response boxes which correspond to each question number. See centerfold for card. Please be sure to answer all questions (but do not write anything in the box for question-numbers labelled "no question"!). Incompletely filled-out cards cannot be processed.

What the numbers mean: When answering questions, "0" always means NO OPINION or NOT APPLICABLE. When the Question is a "yes or no" question, "1" means "YES and "2" means NO. When the question is a rating question, "1" is the WORST rating, "9" is the BEST rating, "5" is an AVERAGE rating, and all numbers in between express various shades of approval or disapproval.

SECTION A

The following questions ask you to rate the articles in this issue on a scale of 1 (poor) through 9 (excellent); 0 = no opinion.

1-3. No question

4. Arena of Death (game)

5. Hillsong (fiction)

6. Eye of the Goblin (fiction)

7. The Weapons of Arena of Death (non-fiction)

8. Science for Science Fiction (science fact)

9. Facts for Fantasy (non-fiction)

10. Games (review)

11. Books (review)

12. Film and Television (review)

13. Media (review)

14. No question

15. This issue overall

16. Is this issue better than the last one? 1 = Yes; 2 = No.

17. Assume that you don't subscribe to *Ares*. Would the quality of this issue alone motivate you to subscribe? 1 = Yes; 2 = No.

18. Your age: 1 = 13 years old or younger; 2 = 14-17; 3 = 18-21; 4 = 22-27; 5 = 28-35; 6 = 36 or older.

19. Your sex: 1 = Male; 2 = Female.

20. Education: 1 = 11 years or less; 2 = 12 years; 3 = 13-15 years; 4 = 13-15 years and still in school; 5 = 16 years; 6 = 17 years or more.

21. How long have you been playing conflict simulation games? 0 = less than a year; 1 = 1 year; 2 = 2 years . . .8 = 8 years; 9 = 9 or more years.

22. What is the average number of hours you spend playing simulation games each month? 0 = none; 1 = 1 hour or less; 2 = 2-5 hours; 3 = 6-9 hours; 4 = 10-15 hours; 5 = 16-20 hours; 6 = 21-25; 7 = 26-30; 8 = 31-40; 9 = 40 or more hours.

23. How many simulation games (of all publishers) do you possess? 1 = 1-10; 2 = 11-20; 3 = 21-30; 4 = 31-40; 5 = 41-50; 6 = 51-60; 7 = 61-70; 8 = 71-80; 9 = 81 or more.

24. What level of complexity do you prefer in games? Rate your preference on a 1-9 scale, with higher numbers indicating increased complexity. Use the following games as guidelines. 4 = *WorldKiller*; 7 = *BattleFleet: Mars*; 9 = *Air War*.

25. Pick the one area about which you would like to see science fact articles written. 1 = I don't like such science fact articles; 2 = Speculative (beyond the bounds of known science); 3 = "Debunking" (e.g., "No, You're Not Going to the Stars"); 4 = Historical overview of a major theory or particular science; 5 = Science fact that relates to simulation games in general; 6 = Science fact article that relates to feature games in *Ares*; 7 = Theoretical, "hard" science articles (to include formulae, graphs, etc.,); 8 = Military articles; 9 = Other (please write in category description)

26. Pick the one area about which you would like to see non-fictional articles on tactics. 1 = I don't like such non-fiction articles; 2 = Historical overview of a particular author and his/her writings; 3 = Overview of a particular fantasy subject (e.g., dragons, unicorns, etc.); 4 = Economic/sociological/political articles as related to fantasy; 5 = Articles on mythologies (e.g., Greek, Norse, etc.); 6 = Articles on weaponry and tactics; 7 = Articles relevant to simulation games in general; 8 = Articles relevant to fantasy issue games in *Ares*; 9 = Other (please write in category description).

27. What percentage of the sf/f games you plan to buy in the next year do you expect will be SPI games? 1 = 10%; 2 = 20%; 3 = 30%;...9 = 90%.

28. Pick the one choice which most closely matches your feelings about fiction in *Ares*. 1 = I would like all fiction removed from *Ares*; 2 = I would only like fiction that relates to the issue game; 3 = I would like to see two stories, one of which relates directly to the issue game; 4 = I would like to see two stories in each issue, neither of which would have to relate to the issue game; 5 = I would like to see three stories in *Ares*, one of which is related to the issue game; 6 = I would like to see a novella or novelette length story in each issue.

Rate the next five questions on a scale of 1 to 5: 1 = I have no interest in such a feature in Ares*; 2 = I have a slight interest in such a feature in* Ares*; 3 = I have a strong interest in such a feature appearing occasionally in* Ares*; 4 = I have a strong interest in seeing such a feature appearing regularly in* Ares*; 5 = I have a strong interest to see such a feature appear in every issue of* Ares.

29. Would you like to see "how-to-play" articles on specific sf/f games?

30. Would you like each science fiction game accompanied by a technical/"historical" background article describing the setting or technology simulated in the game?

31. Would you like each fantasy game accompanied by a technical/"historical" background article describing the setting or technology simulated in the game (e.g., "The Weapons of the Arena of Death" in this issue)?

32. Would you be interested in seeing alternate scenarios, expansions, or play-throughs of *Ares* games in later issues of *Ares*?

33. Would you be interested in seeing category reviews of simulation games in *Ares* (e.g., critiques of "hard" science fiction games, role-playing fantasy games, space opera games, etc.)?

34. Pick the one area about which you would most like to see science fiction games done: 1 = Strategic space conflict; 2 = Tactical space conflict (ship against ship); 3 = Strategic planet-bound conflict (army against army); 4 = Tactical planetbound conflict (man against man); 5 = Alternate history conflict; 6 = Conflict in a contemporary setting; 7 = Role-playing adventure; 8 = Economic/sociological/political conflict; 9 = Other (please write in the category description).

35. How many science fiction games do you own (including the game in this issue)? 1 = 1; 2 = 2; 3 = 3; 4 = 4; 5 = 5 to 10; 6 = 11 to 15; 7 = 16 to 20; 8 = 21 to 25; 9 = 26 or more.

36. Pick the one area about which you would most like to see fantasy games done: 1 = Strategic sword and sorcery boardgames (army against army); 2 = Tactical sword and sorcery boardgames (hero gainst evildoer); 3 = Quest/adventure boardgames; 4 = Sword and sorcery role-playing; 5 = Quest/adventure role-playing; 6 = Classically-based fantasy; 7 = Anthropomorphic societies; 8 = Horror/occult; 9 = Other (please write in the category description).

37. How many fantasy games do you own? 1 = 1; 2 = 2; 3 = 3; 4 = 4; 5 = 5 to 10; 6 = 11 to 15; 7 = 16 to 20; 8 = 21 to 25; 9 = 26 or more.

38. If you are a subscriber to *Ares*, indicate how you came to be one: 1 = An ad in *Strategy & Tactics*; 2 = An ad in *Analog*; 3 = An ad in *Games*; 4 = An ad in a previous issue of *Ares*; 5 = An ad in a sf/f gaming magazine; 6 = An ad in a science fiction magazine; 7 = An ad in a science fact magazine; 8 = An ad in another kind of magazine not mentioned; 9 = Other (please specify on the Feedback card).

39. How did you purchase this copy of *Ares*; 1 = by subscription; 2 = by mail, as a single copy; 3 = in a store; 4 = it was passed along to me by a friend; 5 = other (please specify on the Feedback card)

40. Indicate on 1 to 9 fantasy-to-science-fiction spectrum where your interest lies. For example, if you're *only* interested in fantasy games and stories, you'd write "1"; if your interest were mainly fantasy but included some sf, you might write "2" or "3"; evenly divided interest would be "5"; and, of course, pure sf interest would rate a "9".

41. How many persons, including yourself, will read this copy of *Ares*? 1 = 1; 2 = 2...8 = 8; 9 = 9 or more.

42-43. No questions

On a 1 to 9 scale (1 = particularly dislike this author's fiction to 9 = particularly enjoy this author's fiction) rate the following sf/f authors. 0 = never read this author.

44. Isaac Asimov

45. Edgar Rice Burroughs

46. Arthur C. Clarke

47. Hal Clement

48. L. Sprague de Camp

49. Samuel Delany

50. Harlan Ellison

51. Robert Heinlein

52. Robert E. Howard

53. Fritz Leiber

54. H.P. Lovecraft

55. Larry Niven

56. E.E. "Doc" Smith

57. J.R.R. Tolkien

58. H.G. Wells

Please rate the following games on a 1 to 9 scale, with "1" indicating a particularly strong dislike for a game and "9" an especially favorable opinion. **Please rate only those games which you have played (against an opponent or solitaire) at least once in the last twelve months. If you have not played in the last twelve months, please do not rate it (respond "0" in the space).** *All games listed are SPI published, unless otherwise specified.*

59. Arena of Death

60. Ultimatum (YP)

61. Dungeon! (TSR)

62. Awful Green Things from Outer Space (TSR)

63. Advanced Dungeons & Dragons (TSR)

64. Alien Space (GS)

65. Knights of the Round Table (GS)

66. Space Fighters (GS)

67. Space Patrol (GS)

68. Star Fleet Battle Manual (GS)

69. Strike Team Alpha (GS)

70. Superhero 2044 (GS)

71. The Arduin Grimoire (GG)

72. En Garde! (GDW)

73. Intruder (TFG)

74. Citadel (FGUI)

75. Royal Armies of the Hyborean Age (FGUI)

76. Snit's Revenge (TSR)

77. Swordquest (TFG)

78. Flash Gordon (FGUI)

79. 4th Dimension (TSR)

80. Robin Hood (OSG)

Rate the following game proposals on a scale of 1 to 9, with 1 indicating very little inclination to buy the game if published up through 9 indicating a definite intention to purchase it.

81. *Jason and the Argonauts*. Jason, robbed by his brother Pelias of the kingdom of Iolchus, seeks to regain his rightful inheritance. But first Pelias demands that Jason bring him the fabled Golden Fleece. Thus begins the greatest adventure of Greek mythology, the voyage of the *Argo*, as Jason collects a band of heroes and faces terrible monsters and dangers in his quest for the Golden Fleece. *Jason and the Argonauts* recreates this quest, as one player controls Jason and his band of heroes and the other player (or players) control the rival gods, villains, monsters, and dangers Jason encounters on his voyage. The 22" × 34" map would contain a map of the eastern Mediterranean and several tactical combat displays; character cards would give the various abilities of the heroes and monsters; and 200 counters would represent the heroes, monsters, and armies encountered through the quest. To sell for $15.

82. *The Lost World*. Rumors of a highly unusual plateau in the Amazon basin have reached 19th Century England. A certain Professor Haber has been missing for years after his first exploration of this strange plateau; now the Royal

Academy decides to launch a new exploration to find the missing professor and continue his work. *The Lost World* recreates the classic discovery of a prehistoric world through which a band of adventurers must travel to save Professor Haber — before the land is destroyed in a great volcanic eruption. Players choose characters from among twelve "stock" adventurers (the extremely intelligent but nasty professor, the newspaper magnate's beautiful daughter, the muscular dim-witted adventurer, etc.) and send them through the strange land where monsters roam and semi-men prove friendly or enemies. The game would include a 22" x 34" map of the plateau, character cards, 200 playing pieces, and rules. To sell for $12 to $15.

83. *The Spellstone of Shaltus.* Based on the fantasy adventure by Linda E. Bushyager, this game would simulate the climactic confrontation by the sorceress Leah and her band of friends as they attempt to overcome the evil wizard Shaltus, who after his death has been transformed into a living, malignant version of the heart of Bluefield Castle. Shaltus can turn statues into living beings, create illusions of terrible power and reality, and control unwary humans as his instruments. Leah and her followers must wield their way through the maze, castle, and garden of Bluecastle to find Shaltus before they are destroyed. A game for one to five players, *The Spellstone of Shaltus* would allow players to become the characters in Bushyager's novel (and would include special rules for one player to become Shaltus or to have the evil wizard act independently). The game would, with permission of the author, be accompanied by a selection from the novel or short story. A possible *Ares* game to sell for $6.

84. *The Trojan War.* A colorful game covering this historical/mythical conflict. The approach would be realistic (if hypothetical) in terms of army capabilities, geography, objectives, siege warfare and tactics. However, the gods and heroes involved in the multi-year struggle would be featured prominently. Achilles, Agamemnon, Odysseus (Ulysses), Paris, Hector, Ajax, Diomedes, Aphrodite and the other great figures of legend who participated directly or indirectly in the epic campaign would be lovingly portrayed. The Greek and Trojan players would attempt not only to fulfill their overall military objectives, but the private goals of certain characters as well — a combination of state-of-the-art ancient warfare game systems with the flavor of *The Ring/Freedom in the Galaxy* character system. Would include one full-size map, 200 counters, cards and historical information. To sell for $12-15.

85. *Dracula.* An unusual game based on one of the most famous novels of all time. Using a game-map covering an area of London, the Dracula player uses the eight turns to seek out victims and turn them into vampires, returning during day turns to one of the coffins he has hidden in various locations. The Van Helsing player seeks to find the coffins and/or Dracula in an effort to end the spread of the "disease of vampirism." A chase game with elements of hidden movement and much use of random events and surprise. Faithfully based on the Bram Stoker novel, using actual maps of the locations. One map, 100 counters, player cards, boxed; $12.

86. *Battle Out of Time.* The place is America. The time, the 1920's. It is the era of the flapper and the gangster, the vamp and the G-man. In the wake of the Great War, the country is returning to normalcy. But while some worship at the altar of the stock exchange and call upon the god of greed and profits, others worship at older, darker altars. The names which they incant are those of gods who were old when fair Atlantis sank beneath the cruel seas: Dagon, Cthulu, Yog-Sothoth. While others sample the simple pleasures of bathtub gin, these worshippers are actively preparing the way for the reawakening and reentry into the world of the long forgotten deities. As the year 1929 dawns, the forces of darkness have spread a network of evil across the nation and are prepared to complete the great work. Opposing them are a few discreet men, learned in occult science and determined to thwart their plan. These few have roused the authorities who are now prepared, under the guise of a purported campaign to stamp out illegal breweries and saloons, to destroy the dens of the ancient ones' adherents. Little does the populace know that beneath the headlines of gangland killings and confiscated moonshine, an even greater battle is being fought for the future of mankind. *Battle Out of Time* would simulate this little-known confrontation. Note: Historically, the forces of law lost and chaos was released in the world by the old gods. The results were worldwide depression and war. *Battle Out of Time* would include an 11" x 17" map, 100 counters and 8 pages of rules. A possible *Ares* game. $6.

87. *Solar Wars.* In the year 2765, the last Earth Governor's have departed from the six planetoids of the Eta Cassiopeiae system, leaving the inhabitants to govern themselves for the first time in 600 years. Communications are cut off as the second Xenophobe invasion of Earth reaches its peak. The natives are quickly at each other's throats. However, they have been at peace for almost 700 years and must start their armies from scratch. *Solar Wars* would be a multi-player game with a heavy emphasis on production, while the unpredictable combat system forces each player to make frequent alliances. No attack is foolproof, since the size of the defender's fleet is unknown until it is within missile range. Attacks become all or nothing; failure often means the loss of allies. *Solar Wars* would have an 11" x 17" map representing the planetoids and their crisscrossing orbital paths and 100 counters. A possible *Ares* game to sell for $6.

88. *Duel at Betelgeuse.* The terrestrial heavy patrol cruiser, *Achilles,* holds its lonely vigil around the red giant, Betelgeuse, protecting the hyperjump point that leads directly to the majority of human-inhabited systems. Suddenly, the red alert sounds; the hated N'tel have sent an invasion fleet to attack the humans. The *Achilles* must hold off the first N'tel ships until reinforcements arrive. *Duel at Betelgeuse* would simulate the first round of the Second N'tel War, as the heavily outnumbered (but not outgunned) *Achilles* tries to protect the jump point from N'tel capture and strike at the N'tel fleet. The map of the Betelgeuse system (the sun and several minor planetoids) with 100 counters to represent the main ships and their stinger fleets, the game would allow ships to pass *into* hyperspace (which is the vacuum), duck behind planetoids, and send semi-intelligent fire-missiles, quark torpedoes, and quasar bursts at each other. A possible *Ares* game to sell for $6.

89. *Ghost Ship.* In the late 1990's, astronomers announce that a highly unusual planetoid will pass near the earth. As the object nears, however, scientists realize that it is metal — a spacecraft of an alien race. The US and rival space-faring nations decide to send probes to greet the (hopefully) friendly visitors; the various scout ships reach the ghost ship at the same time and a deathly quiet place. *Ghost Ship* would be a game of exploration as the parties, with their various skills and techniques, attempt to unlock the mystery of the great ship and perhaps be the first humans to make contact with aliens. The game would cover the exploration of the interior of the ship, with the possibility of combat between the scouting parties, discovery of the aliens, revelation of the alien culture, and combat between humans and aliens. The game would include an 11" x 17" map, 100 counters, and could be an *Ares* game. To sell for $6.

90. *Olympus Mons.* The Martian Revolution of 2093-95 (part of which was chronicled in *Battlefleet Mars*) saw widespread action on the Martian surface. Agents of the Ares Corporation attempted to seize a number of important service facilities at the war's outbreak, and later the assault forces of the Ares Corporation attempted to storm the new Martian capital, Aresia. *Olympus Mons* would be an operational level simulation of the various assaults on the Martian capital, using the latest NASA maps of the planet. The game would include a 22" x 34" map, 400 counters, and extensive rules for land and near-space combat. Included would be rules for cybernetic tanks, sudden sandstorms, sand hoppers, and laser and energy beam weapons. A modified *Friction Point* system (from our *Central Front* games) would accurately portray the problems of supply and survival in the hostile Martian environment. If the game proves successful, other planetary conflicts on a similar scale would be created. To sell for $12.

91. *Bolo.* It stands 50 meters high and covers a football field. It has machineguns and missiles, lasers and nukes. It is an unstoppable thing on the attack and an immoveable object on the defense. Armies can weaken it, but only another of its kind can kill it. That kill is a Bolo, and in the wars of the 21st century, it will come to dominate the battlefield. *Bolo* would be a game of tactical armored warfare in the near future involving all manner of sophisticated weaponry, but especially the great cybernetic tanks, the Bolos, which are the subject of a series of stories by Keith Laumer. Included in the game would be scenarios for Bolo-to-Bolo combat as well as combat pitting the great machines against other weapon systems. Special rules governing the technological advancements incorporated in the various models in the Bolo series would also be included. One 11" x 17" map, 100 counters, and 12 pages of rules. A possible candidate for *Ares, Bolo* would be accompanied by a story by the author of the series. Availability subject to agreement with Mr. Laumer. $7.

92. *Galactic Trader.* This game simulates trading between the systems of a galactic empire. Each of any number of players assumes the role of a star trader fleet commander. The players choose what routes to travel, what ports to call at, and what goods to purchase. Players also have options as to the ships they buy, taking into account such factors as armament, speed, and cargo capacity. The game is primarily oriented toward commerce and cooperation between players, but at any time a player can escalate friendly competition to armed conflict or even all-out war. Special rules include piracy, mutinous crews, and bribery of planetary officials. Scenarios would be provided in the game, ending either at the expiration of a fixed time limit, or when one player acquires a certain degree of wealth. Open-ended situations would also be included, however, in which the players build gigantic trading empires from session to session. The game would have an 11" x 17" map representing a volume of space 50 light years to a side, 8 pages of rules, and 100 counters. A possible *Ares* game. To sell for $7.

93. *Universe.* The ultimate science-fiction role-playing game will do for the stars and the future what our acclaimed *DragonQuest* has done for the worlds of fantasy. The game creates an open-ended space opera with enough hard science thrown in to keep the action consistent with the future presented. Participants may be any of an infinite variety of characters of a human or alien nature, such as interracial diplomat, commercial pilot, merchant trader, elite soldier, enlightened explorer, mercenary opportunist, barbaric pirate, independent prospector, or corporate agent. Set in our portion of the Milky Way with provisions for variations and expansions by the Gamesmaster, the game presupposes a human star empire spanning a thirty light year radius. Hungry to expand even further, the empire will support (or at least not interfere with) any type of promising venture the players may wish to undertake to further their characters. Extensive rules for character generation, aliens (friendly or hostile), technological discoveries, weapon studies, education and experience, planet and deep space combat, political and social systems, and spaceship design and use would be included. Would include small displays, 100 counters, and about 150 pages of rules and supplementary material to allow the creation of your own adventure-filled *Universe.* To sell for $10.

94. *Empires of the Stellar Reaches.* Utilizing elements of SPI's smashing new multi-player game, *Empires of the Middle Ages,* this game would place each player in political and military control of the destiny of a space-faring race or family of races, and put him in the position of challenging the political power of the galaxy. Special rules would cover such eventualities as ideological warfare, endemic piracy, colonization and consequent anti-imperialist dynamics, and others. The *Empires* systems would be utilized to handle leaders, diplomacy, fortification, administration, conquest, and "standard" unrest and rebellion (as opposed to particularly ideological or anti-imperialist revolts). The game would consist of a map of our galaxy, counters, and rules, and would sell for $10.

95-96. No question.

Games *(continued from page 37)*

several important questions unanswered by the rules. In reply to a query about movement, I was informed that "movement was considered to be simultaneous." Allen Doum, an assistant editor of *Fire and Movement,* took exception with this interpretation at Origins 80, and challenged myself and Mr. Hamblen about it. The designer now rules that movement is plotted *simultaneously,* and executed *sequentially.* Furthermore, Mr. Hamblen informs me that he is working on a re-design of the game. *EG*

EMPIRES OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Fantastic, positive word-of-mouth!
Spontaneous, all-night gaming sessions at Origins 80!
A must-have game for solitaire and multi-player!

Empires of the Middle Ages is a multi-player game in which up to six players, assuming the roles of dynasts, attempt to build their historical kingdoms into vast empires. From generation to generation, players vie to strengthen the power of their ruling house and pass on ever larger realms from one descendant to the next. The basic play of the game is resolved through the use of cards, each play of an Action Card representing the endeavors of a ruler for one year. Event Cards simulate such occurrences as the outbreaks of plague and famine, new advances in technology, and a ruler dying heirless. Special rules cover the Crusades, the Schism, and the raids by Vikings, Magyars, Saracen pirates, and the Mongols. *Empires of the Middle Ages* comes with a 22″ × 34″ map of Europe, 112 cards, 600 playing pieces, rules booklet, and various aids.

BUYER'S GUIDE FOR EMPIRES OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Age Range: 12 years to adult.

Number of Players: 1 to 6.

Average Playing Time: From 2 hours for a brief game, to 75 hours for the Grand Scenario.

Complexity: Moderate (6.2)

For purposes of comparison, the game of *Monopoly* is considered to have a complexity rating of 2.34.



EVENT CARD — Card Nr. 1

YEAR OF PLENTY

Social State increases by one level in...

Moscovy	Livonia	Lithuania
Prussia	Novgorod	Smolensk
Kiev	Volhynia	

GAME-TURN SEQUENCE

I. *Event Card Segment*
II. *Theological Politics Segment*
III. *The Rounds*
A. First Round
1. Year Card Distribution Phase
2. Crusade Determination Phase
3. Raider Phase
4. Magnate Phase
5. Crusader Phase
6. Initiative Determination Phase
7. First Player-Turn
8. Second Player-Turn
9. Remaining Player-Turns
10. Colonization Record Phase

B. through E. Second through Fifth Round

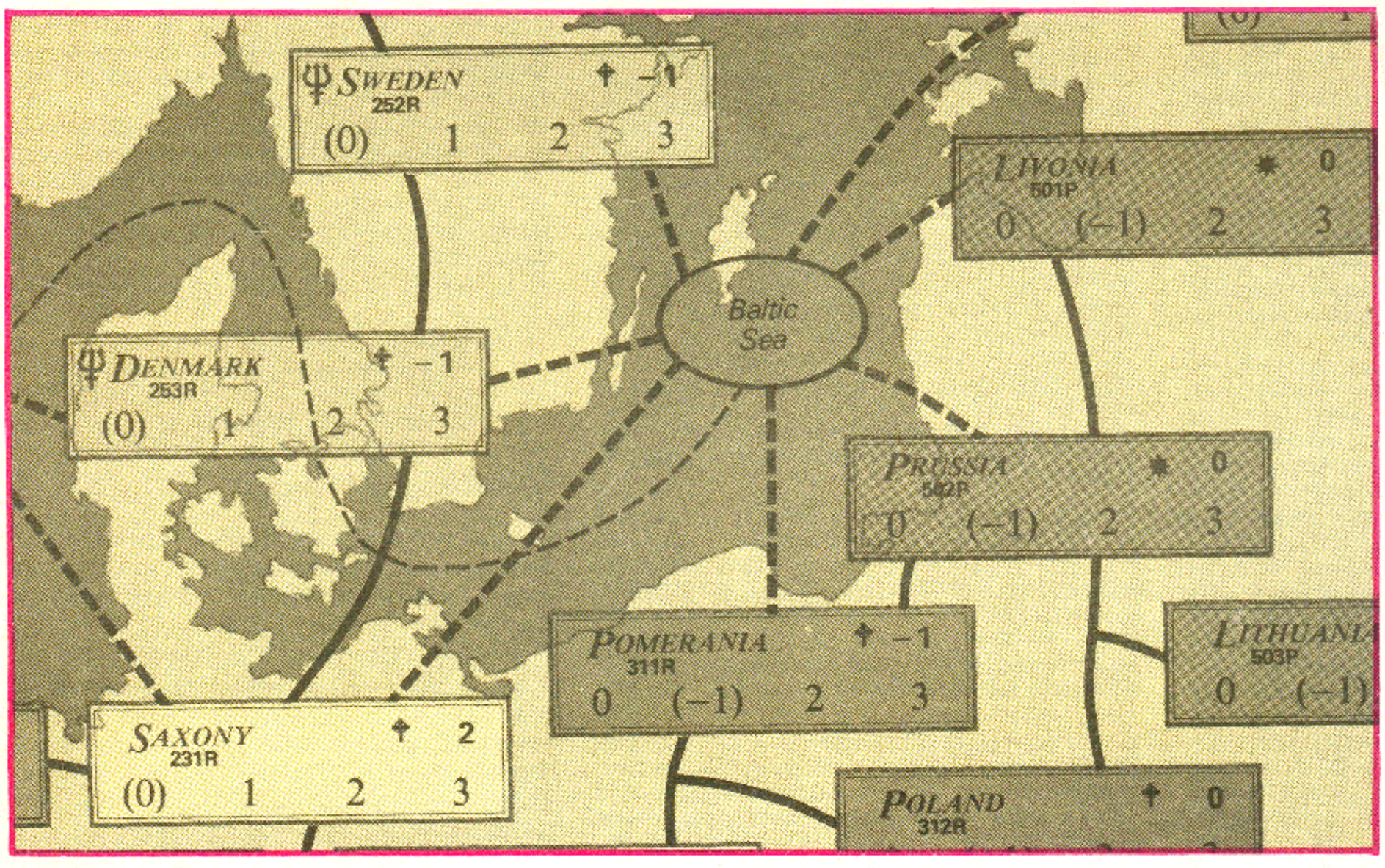
[22.3] CONVERSION RATING CHART

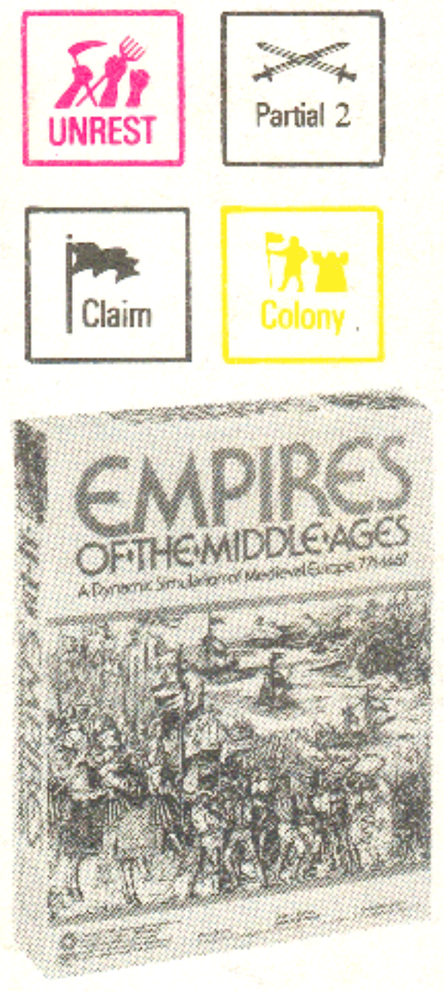
Religion	Proselytic Ability Rating	Convictional Strength Rating
Roman Catholic	10	20
East. Orthodox	10	20
East. Moslem	8	20
Iberian Moslem	0	0
Germanic Pagan	0	16
Slavonic Pagan	0	14
Baltic Pagan	0	16
Christian Heretic	0	16

1. The Conversion Differential is obtained by subtracting the Proselytic Ability Rating of the Player's Religion from the Convictional Strength Rating of the Area's Religion.

2. Religions with a Proselytic Ability Rating of zero cannot be spread through conversion.

20.0 Grand Diplomacy
20.1 Exchangeable Items
20.2 Time Restrictions
20.3 Binding Agreements
20.4 Conditions Under Which a Diplomatic Parley May Be Convened
20.5 Diplomatic Parley Procedure
21.0 Exile
21.1 Conditions of Exile
21.2 Asylum
21.3 Returning from Exile
22.0 Excommunication and Religious Conversion
22.1 Excommunication
22.2 Religious Conversion
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DragonQuest

X. TOURNAMENT COMBAT

Resolving each and every combat situation that may arise in an adventure by recourse to the Tactical Display is very time-consuming and is sometimes not possible. As an aid to GM's who want the option of quickly resolving some combats while lavishing more time and effort on others, we are providing this "quick combat system" for use in resolving random encounters, allowing for faster play during tournaments where players face severe time constraints, etc. The system employs the same series of Actions as the regular combat system, but it does not use the Tactical Display or playing pieces. Other alterations in the existing system are as follow.

88. BASIC TACTICAL PROCEDURE FOR QUICK COMBAT

Whenever a combat situation arises in which the GM wishes to employ the "quick combat" system, the GM should take a minute (or at most two) to sketch out on a sheet of scratch paper the basic situation, the shape of the area in which the combat is occuring, and the *general* positions of the participants. This sketch should not be very detailed. It is meant to be used as a reference for the GM only and is not shown to the other players. Once the GM has decided how everyone is positioned, whether surprise has been achieved, etc., he states the situation.

Example: *"You are standing in the mouth of a shallow cavern. The ceiling is uneven, about 60 feet high at its highest, sloping down to about 20 feet in the corners before it merges with the walls. The cavern appears to be about 50 feet wide and 30 feet deep, and a pile of rubble blocks the only other exit. Sleeping on a pile of treasure not 10 feet away is a baby Red Dragon. Its slitted eyes appear partially open (or perhaps that gleam comes from torchlight reflecting off of precious gems). What will you do?"*

Once the statement of the overall situation is complete, the players may consult at this time or their leader may simply declare a course of action for each of them. If they consult with each other, the GM may choose to assume that it is the characters huddling together for a whispered conference and may act accordingly (wake up the sleeping dragon or whatever). Once a course of action has been determined, the leader states what that course of action will be in general terms.

Example: *"The dwarf will sneak up behind the dragon and strike with his axe while the elf and I stand ready with our bows to look for its weak spot when it rises up to see who hit it. We will then fire at any unarmored patch we can find on it. The magician will meanwhile prepare a blast of malignant flames to cover our retreat if this doesn't work."*

The GM then converts this statement of intent into a series of Actions for each character as described in 13 and 14. He does not plot these Actions in detail. Instead, based on his knowledge of character capabilities, he *estimates* how long the course of action will take to implement and what the results of the individual Actions will be. He will need to roll the dice normally to resolve strikes, check for damage, etc. When he is satisfied that he has established the events of one full Round, he briefs the characters.

Example: *"The dwarf struck for 2 effective points of damage, breaking his axe in the process. Both Erin (the leader) and the elf missed the dragon's weak spot and the blast of flames only did 3 effective points of damage. The dragon is now awake and facing Erin, the elf, and the wizard. The dwarf is still behind him."*

Once players have been informed of their situation, the procedure is repeated. The leader states what each character will do and the GM converts this statement into a rough approximation of which Actions are being implemented and at what cost in time and effort. This procedure is continued until the combat is finished.

89. ESTIMATING MOVEMENT

The movement of characters is estimated using this system by converting hexes to feet. A character with an Action Point Allowance of 12, for example, could move 60 feet in a straight line during a Round of combat. Since the character is unlikely to move in an exactly straight line, the GM should make a small deduction for turns that the character is assumed to be making, thus giving the character the ability to move, say, 50 feet in a Round. If the character is supposed to attack a figure 15 feet away, the GM would probably want to estimate that a third of the character's APA was used to move up to the target before attacking, thus leaving the character the AP's for two attacks.

The GM may ask for clarification during the quick combat procedure where such may become necessary. For example, it may be important for the GM to determine if, in fact, a character is maneuvering up to a target character (bobbing, shifting, etc.) or charging. He may choose to ask such things directly (*Do you want your dwarf to charge once he gets in position or should he sneak up and prepare a good solid blow?*). He may also choose to hint to the characters instead (*Is the dwarf supposed to be trying to do major damage to the dragon or is he primarily concerned with drawing attention to himself and away from the archers?*). However the GM chooses to determine what is happening, he is the sole determiner of events. He decides what Action a character is actually implementing, how much time an Action will take and what its results will be. The other players merely declare their intentions in a general way.

For such a system to work, the GM must be willing to accept that quick combat will be highly abstract and that his estimates cannot possibly have the accuracy of the basic combat system. They are not meant to be totally accurate. The intention is to eliminate the details of maneuver from combat resolution, not to provide an equally detailed system.

90. RESOLVING COMBAT

DragonQuest quick combat is resolved in the same manner as normal combat. Unlike movement, combat retains almost the same level of detail as was present in the basic system. The only changes are as follows:

1. All ranges are estimated by the GM. The GM determines the approximate range (in feet) between a character and his target for purposes of ranged combat. He then divides by 5. This gives him the number of hexes separating the two. All appropriate range modifiers are then applied.

2. Modifiers for Posture, Rear or Flank Attack, height difference between attacker and target (i.e., whether one is standing on a table, for example), facing change, and whether or not the target may be sheltered are all ignored. Only those modifiers applying to MD, AG, PS, fatigue, stun, unconsciousness, Rank, the number of strike checks made for a ranged weapon (and whether the target was the intended target), and (*if* the GM chooses to keep track of such things) the Action that the GM assumes a target or attacker to be implementing are taken into account in quick combat.

All other combat elements, including infection, mounted combat, unarmed combat, special abilities of large (multi-hex) monsters, special and multiple strikes, grievous injury, and damage are applied normally.

91. ABSTRACTING COMBAT DETAILS

The GM may make this system even more abstract (and hasten the resolution of combat even more) by simply assuming that each character can employ only one Action per Round. The character could then either move in a given manner (within the estimated limits of its APA) or make an attack or perform some other Action. The GM would resolve these Actions in order of Agility. Stun recovery, loss of Fatigue or Endurance due to bleeding, etc., would take place normally at the beginning of each Round. This method of combat resolution allows even more distortion to creep into the system, but takes most of the work out of the process since there is even less for the GM to estimate. It is especially recommended for use in tournaments and at conventions where playing time is at a premium.

Whenever this method is employed, a character should always be able to Prepare and Loose one spell per Round. The process of Preparing and the act of Loosing are combined into one single Action (Casting).

Events which take place over a number of Pulses or spells which have their duration measured in Pulses last one or more Rounds, instead. For purposes of measurement, one Round is arbitrarily considered to consist of 3 Pulses. Therefore, a spell which lasts two Pulses is considered to last the entire Round. One which lasts 6 Pulses would last two full Rounds, etc. When in doubt, GM's should round up to the nearest Round. If an event's duration is measured in seconds or minutes, use the scale of one Pulse equals 3 seconds, one Round equals 10 seconds for conversion.

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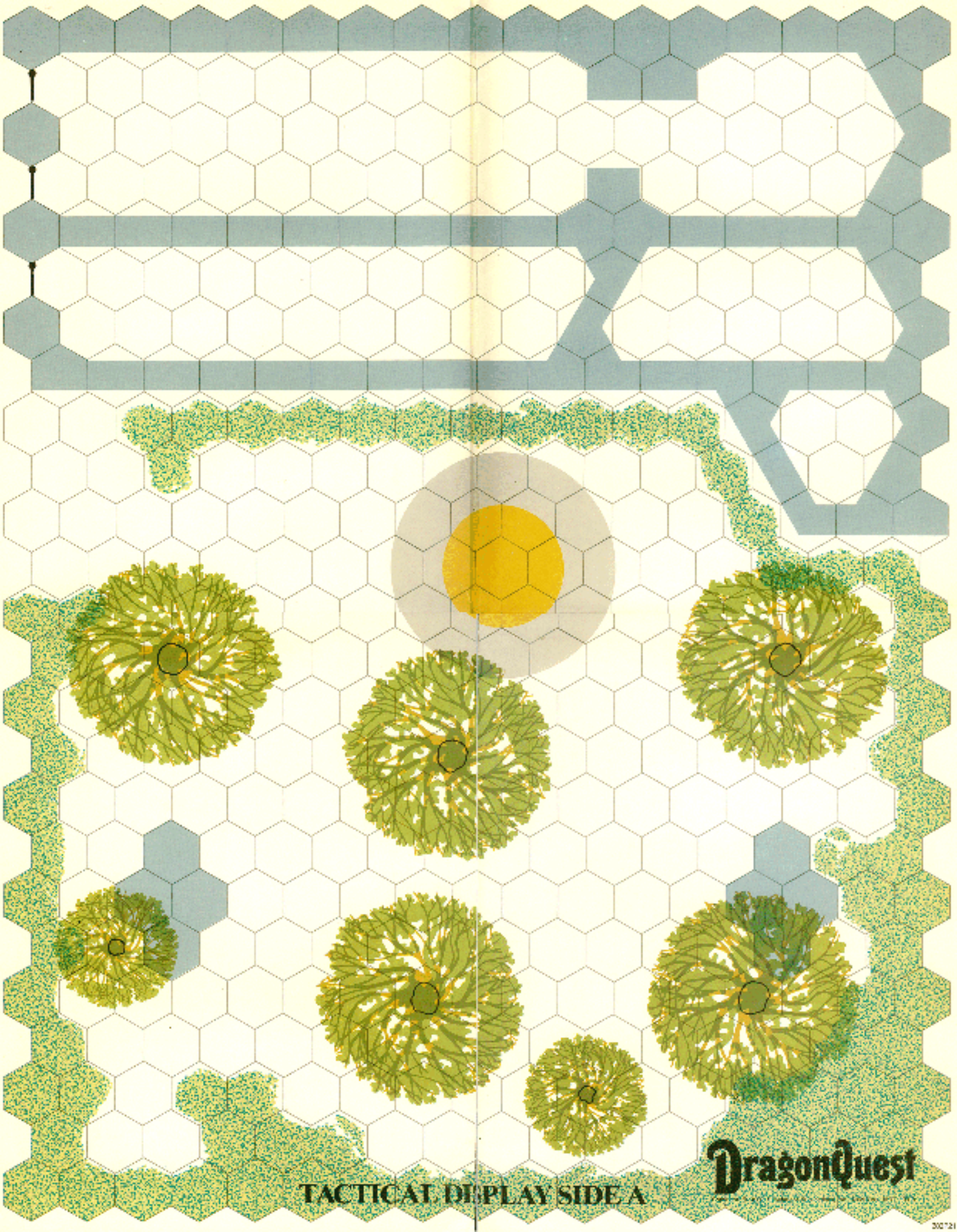


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