

Tales of the Reaching Moon

The RuneQuest™ Magazine

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Humakti Special !



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Inside:

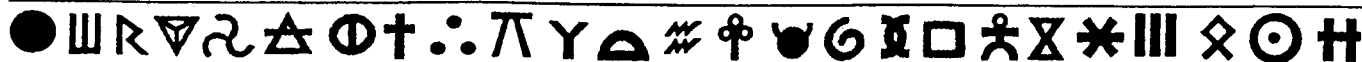
*Greg Stafford
interview*

*Holiday
Glorantha*

Jaxarte pt II

*Temple of the
Wooden
Sword*

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Tales of The Reaching Moon *The RuneQuest™ Magazine*

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Advertising rates are available from the editorial address.

When replying to adverts remember to mention "Tales..." even if you got the ad from another magazine!

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Contributions are gratefully received, especially artwork. All written contributions should be doubled spaced and typed. Contributions on floppy disc will be given preferential treatment! I can accept both IBM 3.5" and 5.25" discs, in ASCII, Wordperfect 5.0 or Word for Windows format (if anyone can tell me how to convert Apple discs then I'll accept these too!). Don't double space lines or format the text since we will only have to take all that out again!

Please remember to give full credit to all of your sources. For artwork please don't send originals by normal post, good photocopies are preferred. As ever, the generous reward for publication is a FREE copy of the issue!

Free Classified Ad's

DESPERATELY Wanted: Nomad Gods boardgame and Hell Pits of Nightfang. Good prices paid (all the bolts you can eat). Contact Simon Phipp, 24 David Road, Lower Stoke, Coventry CV1 2BW.

PLAYERS Needed. For RuneQuest in the Workshop, Retford, Newark, Mansfield and Nottingham areas. Contact Steve Bartle, 185 Walesby Lane, New Ollerton, Newark, Notts. Tel: (0623) 835 535

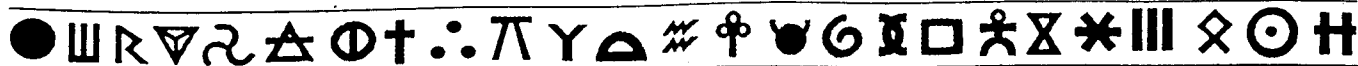
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STILL WANTED: Translators for a French RuneQuest zine. Contact editorial address.

AMSTRAD PCW8512 computer for sale. With parallel/serial interface and additional software. £200 o.n.o. Contact editorial address.



EDICT

Welcome to issue five, a special Humakti issue. Sorry it is so early, it must have given a few of you quite a shock. I'll try and get back on schedule with issue six!

Price Fall

You bet! This comes at the same time as the page count rises to 48 pages. With the present number of words per page and pages per zine, you've never had it so good. For the foreseeable future this also marks the price and page count plateau.

For Future Presentations...

In the future two more thematic issues are planned: Issue seven will be a Hero Quest special, with the emphasis on essays and examples. Issue eight will be a Chaos Feature, and, as befits such a subject, will be another Australian production.

RuneQuest News

A new deal has recently been signed between Chaosium and Avalon Hill which should pave the way for more releases. In the pipeline are Cults of Glorantha, Dorastor and Sun County. The latest release is the Gateway pack Daughters of Darkness.

RuneQuest Submissions

Nick Atlas of Avalon Hill has asked me to remind you again that he is keen to receive new submissions, especially Gloranthan ones. Remember all submission should be sent to him, he'll send on Gloranthan ones to Chaosium.

Arnie Swekel

Some Good News! Following the success of the "Cut Dobyskis' hands off" campaign, Avalon Hill have finally got a good artist for their Runequest line. This is Arnie Swekel, who has recently been doing illustrations for Pendragon.

Mark Morrison

You may have already guessed that Mark didn't get the RuneQuest editors job at Avalon Hill. However he has gone one better and landed himself a job with Chaosium. For the moment he's based in Australia and is keen to hear from any Australian writers or artists concerning Cthulhu, Stormbringer and Pendragon. Address: 29 Bass Street, Box Hill, Victoria 3128, Australia.

Broos

Broos is a French language fanzine DTPed from an Atari ST. So far they have produced five issues, and issue six is expected soon. For details contact: Mr. F. Weil, Association Broos, 19 rue Dumeril, 75013 PARIS. Remember to enclose International Reply Coupons.

A German Conventlon

A RuneQuest convention is being held in Hannover from 14th - 16th June 1991. Details from Earl Kuhne, c/o Saxonia, Wilhelm-Busch-Str. 16, D-3000 Hannover 1.

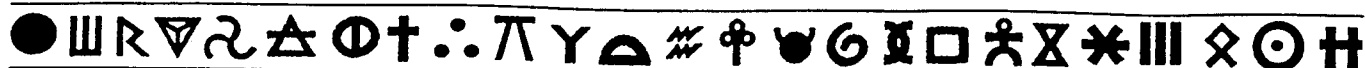
Convulsion '92

This is a UK RPG convention for July 1992 with which I have some small involvement. The guest of honour will be Greg Stafford. Details can be found in the enclosed flyer.

Contents

- 3 HOLIDAY GLORANTHA**
In part 3 of this popular series we stop over at The Greydog Inn in Sartar. Mine's a pint !
- 6 THE DISSOLUTION OF THE TEMPLE OF THE WOODEN SWORD**
The title says it all...the end of a legend.
- 7 THE GREG STAFFORD INTERVIEW**
The Great Man speaks! David Hall caught up with him at Conjunction '90.
- 15 SWORDS & SORCERY**
Swords to warm a warriors heart...or remove it.
- 17 RUINED QUEST**
How can we get RuneQuest back on its feet? Words of wisdom from the Tales crew.
- 21 ESPRIT DE CORPS**
Allied spirits need love too.
- 22 THE CULT OF HUMAKT**
The official long cult writeup, previously unpublished, and arranged as a Tales pullout section.
- 26 INDRODAR GREYDOG**
A simple Humakti warrior who made good.
- 27 LEGITIMUS LIGHTFINGERS CIRCUS OF WONDERS**
A feast for the soul, A tonic for the mind, and a disaster for the pockets ...
- 29 ASSAULT ON THE ISLE OF THE DEAD**
Zombies, monsters and maidens for rescue. What more could you ask for.
- 30 JAXARTE WHYDED**
In part 2, our intrepid scribe visits Weis Domain, and meets a long lost relative.
- 35 ALEBARDS QUEST**
Your chance to enter the Hero Plane with the heroes of the wooden sword temple.
- 38 LETTERS**
The punters strike back ...
- 40 ZINES SEEN**
You want a Zine to read between issues of Tales? We review some of the best.
- 41 A MATTER OF HONOUR**
Thoughts on the cult of Humakt, from a variety of disreputable sources.
- 43 THIS LOVE BUSINESS**
If music be the food of love, play on.
- 46 THE TALES QUESTIONNAIRE**
In which we tell you all about yourselves.

Map drawn by Jon Quaife. With the exception of the Lismelder detail, this map is based on an original by Greg Stafford.



The other wing contains four two-storey private rooms. The first floor always contains a table, lamp, two chairs and two benches, the second "floor" can sleep two people. Quentin never allows more than six people in one of these rooms.

Quentin Longbrewer

A portly man in his late forties, Quentin is a brewer by trade, and took over the Greydog Inn from his father some years back. A jovial man, Quentin is given to breaking into song when pouring mugs of beer. He knows all the local people, although he is not given to gossip. Branduan Greatblade, the boisterous young chief of the Greydog clan, is Quentin's brother-in-law, but few outside the clan are aware of this.

Quentin holds few grudges. However his inn is one of the few in the locality which does not sell Bulster Brewers Fine Ale from Apple Lane; this is because Bulster once sold him three kegs which were all off. Most people regard Quentin as a friendly fellow, given to good beer and hearty jokes. Quentin owns a solid gold pig which sits on the bar. If it is stolen it will always disappear from the thieves swag bag overnight, reappearing on the bar. If the thief ever enters the inn again, the pig squeals out his name.

In contrast with Quentin his wife Carissa is a solemn, humourless woman who rarely has anything to say except to her twin daughters. It is rumoured that her marriage is one of mutual convenience made after her husband was killed in Starbrows Rebellion. Her cooking is widely praised amongst the Greydogs, it is said that a man hasn't lived until he has tasted her Blueberry Pie! Carissa's

Prices at the Greydog Inn

Food and Drink

Supper (vegetable broth, bread, sweetmeats, fish or meat if available)	... 7 clacks
Supper with poultry rather than fish or meat	... 1 Guilder
Breakfast (porridge, bread, cheese, ale, cider or milk)	... 4 clacks

The Kings Ale	4cl/1cl	Colymar Winter Mead*	5cl/5cl
Weeping Swan Best Brew	7cl/2cl	Clearwine*	4gu/8cl
Auld Mutz*	— /7cl	Fine Furthest White Wine	2gu/5cl
Harvest Cider	4cl/1cl	Esrolian Red Wine	2gu/5cl
Gutbuster Scrumpy	6cl/2cl	Old Madge's Gooseberry Wine	1gu/2cl
Finest Sun Domer Mead	9cl/3cl	Old Madge's Dandelion Wine	14cl/3cl

* Subject to availability

Prices are quoted for each jug or bottle and each mug or goblet. A beer jug holds five mugs worth and a wine bottle six goblets.

Accommodation

(prices are not inclusive of meals or beverages; Quentin usually adds this on when he quotes lodging prices.)

The Large Room	10 gu
Smaller Private Room	4 gu
Communal Sleeping Area	6 cl

daughters have inherited her good looks, and wagers have been made by the regulars as to whether anyone will be able to split them up by marrying one of them!

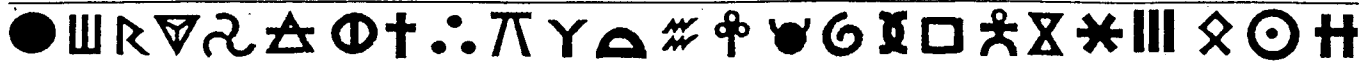
Auld Mutz Ale

Auld Mutz is the Greydog Inns special brew. Its manufacture is the secret of the Longbrewer household and is handed down from father to son. It is a very dark and strong ale, with a slightly sweet taste. Auld Mutz is commonly

drunk at clan festivals and on religious occasions. It is said to have two properties: firstly it apparently enhances the effects of religious ceremonies; and secondly, if it is not mixed with any other drink, the imbibor will not suffer a hangover the next day. Conversely if more than a mug of it is drunk with any other alcoholic substance it is said to cause the worst hangover imaginable!

Because of its importance to the Greydog clan Auld Mutz is never sold outside the inn, and even there it is often unavailable - at least to outsiders.

...strive to hold this shape at culmination.; 768: Similar to 537, except the goat need not be domesticated. (XXIX.12-58) The most common form of clothing among ducks is greaves, usually made of leather or cloth, wrapped around the shins and tied with thongs. (XXIX. 12-59) The Universal Splendor and Power of Yelm: A Hymn by Solinthor (592 S.T.). "Thou dawnest beautifully in the horizon of the sky/O Living Yelm, who wast the beginning of life!/ When thou didst rise in the eastern horizon/ Thous didst fill every land with thy beauty/ Thou art beautiful, great, glittering, high over every land/ Thy rays are upon the earth/ Though thou art in the faces of men/Thy footsteps are unseen." (XXIX. 12-60) It is told by the fishermen of Fronela that when the World Spike exploded and left a gaping hole at the centre of the world all the seas and rivers changed their course to fill this void. This is why rivers flow towards the sea. But nobody told Sir Salmon and this is why, to this day, salmon still travel upriver to spawn. *So much for the wisdom of the salmon! Pug the Perspicacious.*(XXIX. 12-61) An excerpt from Peregrenatius's GUIDE TO THE WEST, translated from the Loskalmi by Goliard the Peripatetic. "The Street of Women in the grand city of Sogolotha Mambrola, a guide for the traveller: "There are on the Street of Women...



The Dissolution of the Temple of the Wooden Sword

by Greg Stafford

Londra of Londros, High Priestess of Humakt, had grown increasingly discontent with her position and responsibility to her Temple. It was as if certain of its powers were fading or no longer held her. Her Chief Priest, Naimless the Colymar, was also affected.

Then came a night when a stranger knocked quietly upon the doorway to Alebard's Tower where the temple resided. It was a stranger who had sneaked past the outer defenses of the temple seemingly without trouble. He was an elf fully bedecked in gleaming copper gear and almost glowing with his own inner light: surely signs of being on a Heroquest. He greeted the party in Swordspeech and entered the tower.

Londra lead the discussion with him. Without much introduction he said his name was Eltang Swiftfoot and confirmed that he was, indeed, upon some elvish Heroquest. He also stated that he had been instructed, by Humakt, to come to this place and to take the Wooden Sword. This shocked many members present who were quite willing to fight a noble Humakti duel to retain the blade which housed their temple.

Londra, though, reacted differently, perhaps inspired by the god. She asked Humakt if the sword belonged to Eltang Swiftfoot. Humakt said "yes." Eltang explained that this was an artifact long held dear by the elves who love all woody things. He also offered to fight Londra a Humakti duel for it.

Londra, though, seemed moved by deeper forces than desire for a fight. Perhaps she did not wish to harm Lord Eltang before whatever struggle was to come for him. Perhaps it was just her memory of how she and her friends had come by the magical weapon. Whatever the reason, Londra peacefully turned the Wooden Sword over to Eltang without a fight. She did, however, repeat certain words to him which were very similar to those words spoken to her when she received the sword. Eltang took it, pledging to strike it deeply into the heart of his enemy, and departed. Outguards on duty reported that he met with a band of elves and left the area quickly. He had mentioned that his task lay in the wild ruins of the land of Dorastor.

Londra then turned to dividing up the property of the temple. The gold and other treasure was divided among the Rune Masters of the cult with shares determined by the former High Priestess. This was considerable wealth and many members were astounded at their share. Londra herself kept the hoard of Umrgh the Ugly, a half-troll who had been her friend, but who had died long ago.

After this the members of the Temple turned to their own clans and tribes. Naimless accepted the most prestigious position of former members and became Tribal Champion for the whole Colymar Tribe. Londra herself went with some followers to the Wind Temple, which had the largest Humakt temple contingent in Sartar. Errol Silksword remained at home for a time, thinking over possibilities available to her. Others went their own way, such as Bagtrap who forfeited his priestly position and went south to the Holy Country. Thus ended the Wooden Sword's history with the Kingdom of Sartar.

This originally appeared in Dragons Past #9, and is Copyright (c) Greg Stafford 1980, 1991.

THE TEMPLE OF THE WOODEN SWORD

The Temple of the Wooden Sword was a wandering Humakti temple based around an ancient Humakti holy sword. This Sword, which was sometimes known as "The Death that Will Not Die", had appeared and disappeared through time, space and legend. The temple was formed in Sartar just before Starbrow's Rebellion. Its first home was the Sazdorf ruins in Battle Valley and many of its original members were Trolls. This home was only established after a fierce battle with the Zorak Zoran worshippers of the Ruins, in which the Sword proved decisive.

For the short time before its dissolution the temple became famous through the deeds of its worshippers. Some of those deeds are related here, but others of note were The Wooden Sword in Dorastor & The Defense of the Wooden Sword against Zorak Zoran.

Sources & Further reading:

Trollpack

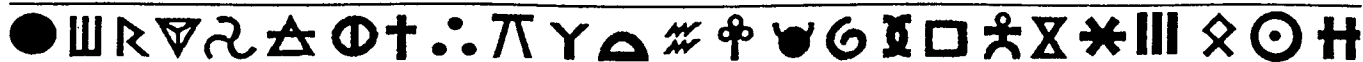
Greg Stafford & Sandy Petersen, 1982.

The Haunted Ruins

Greg Stafford & Sandy Petersen, 1989.

Dragons Past

Greg Stafford, various dates.



The Greg Stafford Interview

General Questions

What was your first introduction to roleplaying?

My first introduction was when I received a copy of 1st Edition Dungeons and Dragons in the mail. I used to work in a belt buckle company out in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, and a friend of mine still did. He was picking up his catalogue and ran into another guy, saw the game and said what's that? The guy said it was a fantasy campaign and my friend said he had a friend working on a game in California. So he bought one out of the printers shop. I think this may have been the first printing of the first edition of D&D which makes me think perhaps mine was the first copy ever sold!

I read it and I thought this is sort of interesting, I wonder what it's about? After quite a while I found my next door neighbour actually played it and he convinced me to sit down and try to play it. I thought it was a fun game and after a while one of my better friends was playing it regularly and we played in Teagle Manor, and that was the last time I played D&D!

I had been groping for something similar to this. When I did White Bear & Red Moon it was a Do-It-Yourself novel, it described the characters and the setting and when you played it the game was the plot. So once I saw what a real role-playing game was I recognised that it was a much superior format

**“I thought D&D
was a stupid game”**

and switched over to trying to figure out how to do that.

RuneQuest came about when I met a couple of people at a Science Fiction Party and they had asked if they could produce D&D statistics for White Bear & Red Moon. I said no, I thought D&D was a stupid game, they agreed, so I immediately liked them! We worked out a deal to do RuneQuest and eventually it ended up with Ray Turney and Steve Perrin designing the game.

What is your favourite role-playing game?

Pendragon. Without a doubt. In a large way Pendragon is the game I began Chaosium to create. I had always had a desire to do an Arthurian game and finally got the skill and the time in order to do it. And so now I can do something different!

Who is your favourite Role Playing Character?

This is in RuneQuest, my character named Tostig. I have this rather perverse attachment to this somewhat disagreeable character.

What sort of gamer would you say you are or would like to be (using Glenn Blacows "Four Fold Roleplayer Analysis")?

I think that I'm mostly Story-teller and Role-player, so forty percent for each of these and ten percent for the Wargamer and Powergamer aspects.

At Chaosium we had a system of grading players that we used, and it's quite unofficial, where we assign a gamer a number between one and five. One is the perfect gamer, he contributes the right amount, is quiet at the right times. So if you think that six players is the ideal game it might be one person

who's a one and one person who's a five. I've been told that on a good day I'm a three!

Do you use music as background in your games?

Very little. I was compiling a set of tapes for background music in Pendragon but we generally don't. We generally turn off all the outside sources of stimulation when we play role-playing games.

What is your favourite music?

My favourite music is Rock & Roll. My favourite group is probably the Rolling Stones, followed closely by Jefferson Airplane, and The Doors. I'm giving away my age of course!

What books do you read in your spare time?

I mostly read books about mythology, and Arthurian books at this stage. I have pretty much abandoned my search to read good fantasy fiction, because there is so much drek that I don't have time to wade through the bad stuff to find the good stuff, but when someone recommends something highly to me I'll read it.

Chaosium

How many people work for Chaosium?

We have seven full-time employees. The company is very important, people tend to think of myself as the Chaosium. I founded it and I hired all the people that work there but anything that you see that you like is the result of teamwork at Chaosium. We run it sort of like an Orlanth council (seven people!) where each person has their own particular skill.

I really want to emphasise the part Lynn Willis has, he's our production manager and if you like the way something looks it is to his credit. He is much like the foundation, the prop, which holds everything up that we produce that looks good.

How big are the offices of the Chaosium?

It's pretty small. I don't know the square footage, but everyone who comes by is astonished at how small we are. People expect us to be like TSR because our product looks good and is professionally done.

What is Chaosium's most popular game?

Right now it is Call of Cthulhu without a doubt. It used to be RuneQuest but we disrupted that for ourselves by licensing it out to Avalon Hill.

What do you see in the future for Chaosium?

New Games systems?

Well, at this time a new game system would be something like Glorantha: The Game. We are very much interested in expanding the types of games and the way that they are played. Each game that we do we hope provides some new or original idea or aspect to role-playing gaming. Call of Cthulhu had the sanity rules which changed the way people think and play their characters. Prince Valiant is another effort, it is really the epitome of the new style of role-playing that I prefer over a rules heavy game. I like to make it a story-telling game. Pendragon again has a lot of revolutionary material that add aspects to role-playing. With everything we do we try and be new and innova-

tive, we are not "wanna be's", we aim to be creators that other people follow, and in general we think this is true.

Many of the standard ways things are published these days were originated with Chaosium. We are the first company that did games specifically based on literature, the first company to have a running example like a story to explain the rules (Ruric's Saga), and the player handouts that appear in supplements. We try to make all our games gamesmaster friendly, we want to entertain the gamesmaster so that he will be inspired enough to play the game. Since the gamesmaster is a bottle-neck of information we figured out that anything that makes his job easier is good.

New Approaches to rules systems such as rules light Prince Valiant system?

Experienced gamers are almost always put off the Prince Valiant system unless they are trying to teach new gamers what role-playing is about. We don't expect Prince Valiant to be a game that people play forever, it is an introductory game so it's not really well accepted by people who have already been introduced to RPG's. But we do intend to go more towards the story-telling game and just use the character sheet to maintain some statistics rather than being the base from which the game is run. The current plans for

Glorantha: The Game are very much for a story-telling game. It is based on mythology and therefore it requires subjective as opposed to an objective reality and you can't do that with numbers and rules.

What do you mean by a Story-telling Game?

By "Story-telling Games" I mean a game which engages the entirety of the players' creative capacity, not just his ability to understand the rules. Its emphasis is in participating in the story, not on memorizing rules. The rules serve as a vehicle for the interaction between the gamesmaster and the

"I like to make it a storytelling game"

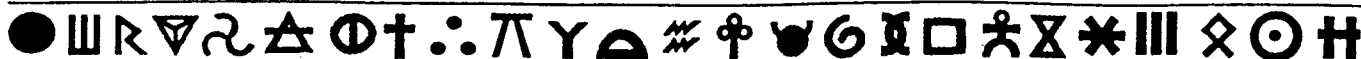
players, not an end in themselves. One of the really important aspects of this is to allow the players to participate in the creative game/story process by discovering new insights and opportunities inherent in the story, and to break free of limitations imposed by rules.

New areas?

We would like to do computer games if someone would respect us and pay us the right amount of money. For years I have been going around to various computer game companies and asking them if they would like to hire our professional services to design a game. For years I have gotten pretty much the same answer from the people who own the computer companies and they tell us that they don't need game designers, "we have programmers". To me this is like saying "we don't need composers, we have musicians"! There is some change going on in the industry these days, there are a lot of people who used to be in the paper game industry who are now working in computer games: most of the staff of Hero Games; Steve Perrin; Dave Arneson; and Sandy Petersen. So there tends to be more professional game design in it.

We have recently licensed Call of Cthulhu to Infogrammes, the French software company, to do a computer version and we may become very actively involved in that. The game they





are planning to do first is called, I think, *The Haunted House*. I don't know exactly how it will turn out or how complex it will be but in it the first thing you're instructed to do is turn off all the lights in your house, turn off the radio, and turn on the computer. Everything you see on the screen is what your character sees, and the entire game is made to invoke an emotional response rather than an intellectual response.

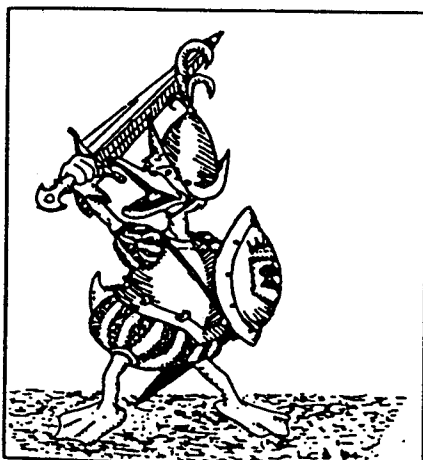
Are you going to be doing anything more to encourage women in gaming?

Yes, absolutely. Our society needs to be re-integrated. American society is very fragmentary in its nature, people become isolated from each other I think

***“I’m feeling
very optimistic and
hopeful”***

in a large part due to the way everything is run in America by commercial sales. I like women! I love to have them around, and we do want to do more to encourage women in gaming. The original fantasy games were very much a masculine pursuit. It's politically incorrect to tell people that there are things boys do and things girls do, but I believe it is a fact. For 90,000 years human society has operated this way. So at the beginning Dungeons and Dragons was about killing things and robbing them - very masculine pursuits. It has very little to appeal to women.

Call of Cthulhu changed this quite a bit because it's not just how big and



strong you are, but how smart and how quick you are - and how fast you can run! So Call of Cthulhu has a tremendous appeal for women.

Pendragon goes ever further, and I'm really encouraged by the number of women who play Pendragon because it's a game in which at most only half of the game is spent in combat. The entire social and courtly aspects in Pendragon appeals to women. I always ask women who don't play these games what would make them interact, and it's very much the emotional part of gaming that appeals to women. This is something men need to learn more about too! So we would like to make games that interact with this part of the psyche more, and which appeal to women.

So we probably need more women GM's then?

Yes! I don't know many women GM's. In my own Pendragon campaign it is imperative that all the players also gamemaster, so the women players gamemaster. Again this is a role that is not generally acceptable by society for women. They are "not supposed to be" leaders, and the gamemaster is very much a leader.

So we want to broaden the appeal of role-playing games to show women how easy it is to get into gaming.

RuneQuestions

There have been various rumours about the relationship between Avalon Hill and Chaosium. What is the latest situation?

We've had a very difficult relationship with Avalon Hill, the expectations which each of us had of the other have not been met and were not clearly communicated at the beginning of the relationship. So there has been a lot of disappointment and negative emotional response on their part and ours during the relationship, to the point where I became so discouraged that I have not done any RuneQuest for about a year. Lately, however, they have a new President who has a new attitude and is very much interested in revivifying Rune-

Quest. They plan to hire an editor to handle the line in-house and to handle the work which we used to do for them and that they were unhappy with. We are very excited about this, as long as they hire someone who can do the job. At this stage we are hoping it will be an Australian gentleman named Mark Morrison. Mark has done a lot of tournament RuneQuest material in Australia and we have published a fair amount of his Call of Cthulhu material. So we are hoping that either him or at least someone like him can be hired by them and once that occurs we will see a lot of exciting thing coming out for RuneQuest. At this stage I'm feeling very optimistic and hopeful.

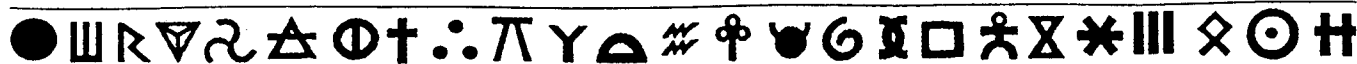


So all RuneQuest submissions should be sent to Avalon Hill rather than Chaosium?

We are not even going to look at it until we settle the new deal. So send it to Avalon Hill, first, and let them deal with it or not. If they decide it is something that they like and can use then they will send it on to us for approval.

Are you still going to be actively involved in editing Glorantha submissions?

Only to the extent of correcting it if it is wrong and offering guidelines. I have a plan of what I'd like to do which is to almost have classes for people who would like to do Glorantha RuneQuest material, so that they can get a leg up and not be always guessing what would be right. Ideally we might have a couple



of hour seminar at a convention. But basically I don't have the time for close editing of RuneQuest any more. If it comes down to doing RuneQuest or Gloranthan material I will be a creator rather than an editor. Other people can edit.

This sourcebook idea which has been floated, what will this be ?

It will be taking any number of the million words that I have compiled over the last twenty years about Glorantha to create sourcebooks that will be useful to the gamesmaster. The largest and most enjoyable parts of the scenarios and supplements is the background anyway. For instance about one half of the material in Trollpak is background material. So if you can imagine Trollpak without the scenarios and the game stats that would be the type of material we would publish. From the response I've gotten in France, here in England and in the USA we'll probably undertake it and if it sells well enough we'll continue.

Is the artwork in RuneQuest going to get any better ?

Well it can't get any worse, can it? So I would hope so. This is going to become Avalon Hill's responsibility and if they can get a reasonably astute editor then inevitably it will get better.

What was the cause of the slow appearance of supplements from 1984-87 ?

A large part of it was my divorce. Because so much of it was dependant on my origination for the editing of material, when I went through a divorce I was pretty non-functional for quite a while and I just didn't have the energy or the inclination to do a lot of work. Fortunately this was at the time Avalon Hill had asked us for reprints, so the reprint material from RuneQuest II to RuneQuest III was done in that time.

Again a large part of it was because we didn't receive enough submissions. We are dependant on freelance submissions for quantity and I urge everyone

“ Well it can't get any worse, can it ? ”

to put some material together and send it along to Avalon Hill. I am very interested in seeing original material. For a long time I was very restrictive on how it should have been prepared and viewed, but lately I have become more liberal. So if its mostly correct I'll probably approve it rather than making everybody second guess my inner thoughts - and loosen the world up a bit so that it can be interpreted by people a bit more.

Are we going to see future supplement appearing at the recent high rate ?

That's going to be entirely in the hands of Avalon Hill.

Are there any new supplements on the cards ?

Avalon Hill has two Gateway scenarios that are being prepared. One is called the Lost City of Eldarad which is ready for release, I believe next month. It's not a Gloranthan scenario pack, its format is derived from the Pavis scenario pack. The other one in the works is called Daughters of Darkness, originally it was a tale of twelve cities, and it was so large that it is now a tale of one city! It's a low level RuneQuest campaign which is very competently written.

After that I don't know what they have on the agenda.

Any news about Praxpak ?

There has been no movement on this since I made my decision not to do any more work on it. A significant proportion of it is done, after all a large part of it is the RuneQuest III version of Cults of Prax, and the rest of it is sociological and geographical detail. It may come out as a sourcepack, if so it will probably be one of the first ones. The next one after that would logically be Sartar Pack. Sartar is where the bulk of my campaign took place and its the area I feel most at home in, and have the most information finished about.

So there's no news about Borderlands, Pavis or Big Rubble reprints ?

They are just in limbo awaiting some decision from Avalon Hill.

Whatever happened to Dorastor and its sanity rules ?

We probably will not use the sanity rules when Dorastor comes out. It was an experimental idea that we had but there is so much bizarre material that appears in a normal RuneQuest game that it probably would be inappropriate. We do believe in maintaining some sort of purity of the genre and sanity is the heart of the Call of Cthulhu game.

Dorastor was, well... in the early days we were much more naive and ambitious about what it would take to prepare something for publication and

“ I Like Women ! ”

when I saw a parcel of good ideas and statistics I used to think that publication of a supplement was just around the corner. After having had experience of preparing these things it's really apparent to me that there is much more work involved. So the promises we once made are hopes more than plans at this stage.

Dorastor is a fun place for anyone except player characters! The design of



are also going to have a significant influence on it.

Why a new edition of Pendragon ?

When we did the first edition of Pendragon the primary complaint I got from players was that they would like to play it but didn't feel that they had enough knowledge to play it properly. So they were intimidated by their lack of knowledge.

The new edition addresses this problem. It has about 50% all new material, all of which is background to the playing of an Arthurian character. It explains the basis of feudal society, of knightly obligations, of what your family will do and is expected to do. Information that everyone would know if they were a knight in Arthurian Brit-

“Drag Grandpa out of bed, strap him to his horse and send him off !”

ain. We had to drop all the non-Romantic material for it, unlike the first edition you play only a Christian Cymric knight. But at least it tells you all you need to know to play him properly.

The first supplement Knights Adventurous will expand the base of potential characters, to be non-Cymric Christian knights. With other nationalities and even non-Christian religions. So that we can take the opportunity to explore the Arthurian mythos in our own way.

Is Pendragon compatible with the scenarios which have been produced before ?

It certainly is. The method of determining characters has only changed a little. The skills list has changed somewhat.



The traits have only been changed by adding one new one. There were also variances in how people were giving out Glory, so we have tried to tighten that down. So from campaign to campaign it will be more consistent.

Does Pendragon include any previous supplements within it ?

Portions of the Nobles book have been incorporated directly into Knights Adventurous. Some of the material is in the game itself, we have completely dropped the entire economic system with no plans to reuse it. That was put in really for people who were playing solo and wanted to keep track of such details.

Is there anything on the cards in terms of future releases ?

After Knights Adventurous which is due out in October/November the next release will be called The Boy King. (Out soon - ed) The basic game in Pendragon starts in 531 which is at the height of Arthurs rule. We really had a problem determining when to set the game because one of the best parts of it is the built in escalation and change through time that is inherent in a campaign. I finally decide to set it in the height of Arthurs reign because this is a period most people are familiar with.

The Boy King is going to re-introduce the idea of the campaign and start off with the chronology at the time of Uthers death with adventures in a Dark Age setting where there are not very many rules for society. We'll move it ahead year by year up to Arthurs drawing of the sword and the early establishment of his kingdom. So that players will have the opportunity to be in on the earliest foundation of the Arthurian realm. Hopefully, if we can put it all in, it will take us to the year 531.

Subsequent to that we will probably do the second part of the campaign which will take it from 531 on. When I say the campaign it will include adventures that you can participate in at any time, but also a year by year chronology of what's going on in Arthurs court. It's so that players will have the opportunity to be a witness or participant in the really great and exciting stories in Arthurian mythology.

The primary inspiration being the



Thomas Malory tales ?

Yes, I finally decided to just use the Malorian context as the basis for it, because this is the most accessible version of the story. It's the one that most western interpretations of Arthurian legend are based upon, whether it's the musical Camelot, or the movie Excaliber, or T.H. Whites Once and Future King. They were all derived ultimately from Malory.

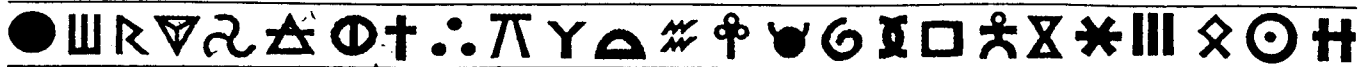
However Mary Stewarts Dark Age version has also had its influence, for instance having Romans as a nationality to play. The Dark Age influence is also there as well. As Arthurs realm becomes more and more enchanted it gives opportunity for that wild and outrageous Welsh version as the forces of Faerie become more powerful in the realm.

Will there be any pre-dating of the campaign to before Uther, perhaps back to the time of the early Mary Stewart books ?

The Pendragon campaign officially begins when Uther dies. But if the game proves to be as successful as I hope it will be then ultimately we would like to publish something that is pre-pre-Uther! Because it is a very interesting period and much less restrained. I know that one of my original test players actually began his campaign in the reign of Aurelius Ambrosius, so they are playing fourth generation player characters. That is to say the great-grandchildren of their first characters, and they have now entered the interregnum after Uther has died - when my campaign actually begins!

I think what I'd like to do is try and play from the reign of Vortigern, through the Mary Stewart books and into the Malorian tales.

I would like that too. Of course the



“I got tired of my friends coming by ...”

Pendragon campaign is planned so that you will do the entire reign of Arthur in about two years of game time. to start all the way back with Vortigern will add at least another two years to the campaign! If you have time for it it's great!

Though it will all end with the death of Arthur?

That's the plan. One of the critical aspects of the entire Malorian Arthurian legend is that there is an end to it. This is written right into the Pendragon game where in the introduction it states some of the significant factors in the game, one of these is mortality. When you start your character and are playing in a campaign you know he's going to die. So unlike any other role-playing game which has been published to date there is a start, a middle, and a finish. This gives an entirely new outlook to how the game is played. The end of the Malorian interpretations is very fatalistic and it colours the way in which the story is understood and I want this to be in the game as well. As the doom of Arthur overtakes him, the players will also be aware that the doom is overtaking their characters and this will emphasise the player interaction with the Arthurian mythos. So players should take all of their characters and go off to die gloriously for the realm. You know, drag Grandpa out of bed,

strap him to his horse, and send him off!

What made you produce Prince Valiant?

I got tired of my friends coming by and saying "Oh, you're a game inventor, lets play one!" And then asking them to read a 150 page rulebook in order to play! I created Prince Valiant for two reasons: one, to be a storytelling game to allow a lot of freedom of play between the game master and the players; and secondly, to be a beginners game. In Prince Valiant you only need to read one page of rules in order to play. It takes about five minutes at the most to create a player character and then you can play. We need to get more people into role-playing entertainment and Prince Valiant was designed for this.

Are there still Prince Valiant comic strips?

Prince Valiant is still running weekly in American newspapers. It's the oldest running continual comic strip in the world. It's been running for over 50 years! My father remembered his father reading it to him as a child. They are available, there are a number of reprints in the States that are coming out. In a large part I picked Prince Valiant because I harbour a large affection for it that I developed as a child and it is still accessible. It's not a widely read or popular comic these days, but it's still around.

Whose idea was the coin system?

Err... I believe that was my idea... I'll take credit for it! If someone remem-

bers otherwise I'll change it. At first it was just going to be flipping one coin.

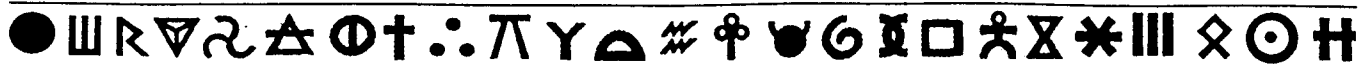
We did a lot of experiments, for a while we were going to have a spinner but that just proved to be impractical and limited so the coins idea came in with a lot of influence from other Chaosium employees. I would also say Bill Dunn was a significant contributor to the idea of the coins.

Both Pendragon and Prince Valiant are Arthurian games, why does this genre appeal to you so much?

The Arthurian story has been told and retold for fourteen hundred years. In a large way it is the myth of western culture. It epitomises so much of the conflict and opportunity in our own culture and it is very adaptable to the times. I believe that the Arthurian mythos has something very significant to teach us today about ourselves and our culture. It just strikes a deep and resonant cord within me, and within a lot of other people as well. There has been a tremendous Arthurian revival in the States ever since the movie Camelot came out, due in a large part to the works of an Englishman, Geoffrey Ashe. He has done a lot to popularise the myth and bring it back into peoples consciousness. So I love the story, I always have and I wanted to get it out there as much as possible and do my part for re-mythologising the future.

Greg Stafford was interviewed by David Hall at the Conjunction of the Million Spheres role-playing convention in July 1990.

...meretrices (harlots) of every race, species and grade: *pedanae*, who lurk the corners and solicit; *quasillariae*, poor servants who escape for a few minutes with a basket containing their daily task, prostitute themselves for a few coppers and return furtively and hurriedly to their wool spinning; *copae*, the wine shop girls, who get a man drunk, then go to bed with him; *peregrinae*, foreign women who tempt by promising novel practices; *saltatrices* and *fidicinae*, the dancers and flute players who combine musical entertainment with their other trade, hiring themselves out for banquets; *mimae*, the actresses of the Circus and other theatres, who use the stage chiefly as an advertisement to attract customers to buy their love; *lupinariae*, who occupy well-run houses, where each has her own room, with her name and price above the door, capable of being reversed to read "*Occupata*", when she is entertaining a guest; even the *sagae*, hideous old women, worn out as prostitutes, who deal in love philtres, procurement, midwifery, abortive potions, and sorcery; finally, the *famousae* - the famous ones. Buying the favours of a *famousae* is the most expensive pleasure in the world. However, one can find, just beyond the houses of the *famousae*, the apartments of the *delicatae*, charming girls, not as unreasonably expensive as the great courtesans, but fresher and younger, and well enough gifted and accomplished in pleasing a guest." (XXIX 12-62) Loess is the fine yellowish-brown soil of Matkondu, the northern lands of Teshnos in the far east. Loess is blown by the crue winds



Powers

While each of the participants remain faithful to Humakt and don't break their geas the powers of the Lottery sword remain intact. If one of them dies, becomes apostate or breaks his geas then that particular gift he bestowed on the blade is revoked. Thus, as time progresses, the powers of a Lottery sword diminish.

Value

Aside from the material value, Lottery swords are only valuable to the original participants in the lottery. Because each of the participants are bound by their geas all would like to possess the sword.

The only honourable way a Lottery sword can change hands is by a duel. Any participant in the lottery may challenge the current owner of the sword at any time. Often these challenges are made as first-blood duels, but the wielder has the right to refuse with honour. Only a challenge to the death cannot be refused. Whoever wins gets the sword. Of course, the very deadliness of the sword gives the present wielder an incredible advantage over a challenger. But, because the properties imbued in the weapon are progressively removed as each competitor dies each participant will want to get his hands on the sword as soon as possible.

Fighting to the death over a lottery sword is expressly forbidden by almost all Humakti temples outside the Holy Country. It is perhaps deplorable but nevertheless common for the owners of Lottery swords to move away, hide or otherwise evade their fellow contestants in order to avoid continuous challenges.

Discipline, truth and honour are vital for a temple or regiment of Humakt to function and prosper. A deadly squabble over a Lottery sword can ruin that completely, sowing deceit,

*Editors Note:

The custom of duelling to the death and Lottery swords are sometimes blamed as causes of the ineffectiveness of the Humakti temples in the Holy Country. Others suggest they are only symptoms of the characteristic bickering and in-fighting of these temples. What is certain is that this weakness is at the root of the military incompetence which has allowed the forces of Greymare, the Wolf Pirates, and now the Lunars, to so comprehensively, and continually, defeat the numerically superior forces of Esrolia.

greed and death amongst Swordbrothers - comrades who have to trust each other totally in the heat of battle. For this reason almost all temples to Humakt outside of the Holy Country have banned sword lotteries as divisive. Only the jaded fops of Esrolia continue the practise, much to the disdain of their fellow Swordbrothers abroad.*

Swords of Sharpness

by Rudy Kraft

Description

Appears as any other normal sword.

Knowledge

Common; Owner Only.

History

The procedure for enchanting a Sword of Sharpness was discovered by an unknown warrior of the Dawn Ages. It involves calling upon no gods and so it can be done by nearly anyone.

Procedure

To begin this ritual, a high quality sword is needed. It can be made out of any material usable by the owner. The sword is then taken into combat with a Fireblade spell on it (actually any great heat will do so long as the sword remains hot throughout the entire ritual). The sword is then used on an intelligent enemy while sacrificing permanently one point of POW. If the blow fails to hit the enemy, the point of POW is not lost and the enchanter may try again. If the blow hits the enemy, the power is lost and the sword is enchanted if that blow kills the enemy. If the blow does not kill the enemy, the ritual must be begun again using another point of POW.

Powers

A Sword of Sharpness is +5% to hit and parry, +1 on damage and +1 (+2 if iron) on its own hit points. The sword loses these powers upon the death of its owner and, in any case, these powers

don't work for anyone else even while the owner lives.

Value

The value of the sword only.

Death Swords

by Rudy Kraft

Description

A normal iron sword of any type (from knife to greatsword).

Cult

Associated: Humakt, Yanafal Tarnils.
Enemy: Zorak Zoran, Vivamort

Knowledge

Cult Secret, Owner only, Few

History

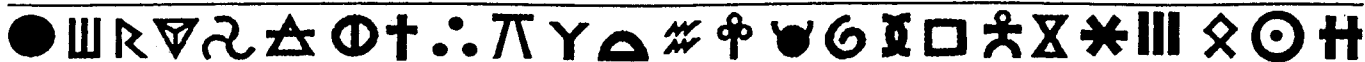
A Humakti hero named Dilfin Doomfarer first discovered this enchantment during the Gbaji Wars. Swords of Humakt and, later, Yanafal Tarnils have sometimes sacrificed the power and attuned death swords as a final retributive stroke against their slayers.

Procedure

This is taught by the hero sub-cult of Dilfin Doomfarer. Swords must permanently dedicate one point of POW and go through a ritual in which they dedicate their sword to the service of their patron god and call on him to strike down their murderer.

Powers

If the possessor of a death sword is slain by an assassin's attack (from behind, by surprise, by deception, etc. - in the honest opinion of the possessor) the spirit of the possessor can use the sword for one thrusting attack on the assassin at 200% (or at the character's normal attack chance, if it is higher). Once the sword has been created anyone of any cult may attune the sword by sacrificing another point of POW to it. However, anyone who has a Death Sword has given up all hope of resurrection, for use of the sword inducts the slain warrior directly into the ranks of Humakt's (or Yanafal Tarnil's) own.



Ruined-Quest?

Resurrecting RuneQuest - an investigation by the Tales staff

RuneQuest is a great game. We all know that. Unfortunately, things haven't been going so good for the game for some time. We all know that too. We present here our thoughts about the history of the game, the hole RuneQuest is currently in, and what action we think Avalon Hill should take to dig its way out again. We have no intention of pointing bones at either Avalon Hill or Chaosium; our intention is to present the facts as we see them and suggest remedies.

You will find our position is a conservative one. From our correspondence with Avalon Hill, we gain the impression that they're eager to take the game to new places, to try and second-guess the market and provide what it seems to require. However we believe it would be more useful for Avalon Hill to consolidate the present position before they try to expand. Comment on this article is sought after and welcome. Perhaps you have ideas of your own. Let us know. More importantly, let Avalon Hill know what you think!

Some Ancient History

The golden period for RuneQuest players was without a doubt from 1982-83, when the game won most of its fans. In that time Chaosium produced five excellent boxed sets: Questworld, Trollpak, Pavis, Borderlands & Big Rubble. The last three boxes were a trilogy of adventures in the same geographical setting (Pavis was cited by Ken Rolston in Dragon #156 as still one of the best all-time City supplements).

The Avalon Hill Edition

After this frenetic publishing burst, RuneQuest went into hibernation while the Avalon Hill edition of the game was prepared. Players waited on the edge of their seats. The time delay was too long, and some started to drift off. When the game did come out in 1984 it was bigger and better, but many were disappointed. The price was prohibitive; the physical quality could have been improved on; and the new rules had gained new complexities which some players were unable to cope with. But at any rate, RuneQuest was back. Some loved it, some decided to live with it, some deferred judgement, and some dropped it. Glorantha was inseparable from RuneQuest in the earlier Chaosium editions, but in the Avalon Hill edition it became optional.

What was more important to gamers, the world or the rules? We're still finding out. Those who stayed around looked eagerly for the first supplements, to get their hands on new adventures to try out the revised rules. By and large they're still waiting.

Four kinds Of RuneQuest

These days you can buy RuneQuest in four different flavours, and this has its own problems. In particular the advent of a watered-down version, Standard Edition, has created a number of extra hassles, although its principal aim - to make RuneQuest available at a lower price - has been realised. The four types of RuneQuest are:

Deluxe: The basic RuneQuest unit.

Ideally, everyone should buy this one. The price has dropped from its high initial level. Even so, it is the most sound investment on the roleplaying market, at any price.

Player's Box: A fair idea, making available a small portion of the game to those with limited budget or interest. However, RuneQuest is not a game like Dungeons & Dragons which requires an imbalance of knowledge between players and gamesmaster; ideally, everyone should buy Deluxe instead. We know of one games shop in 1989 that took nine months to sell one copy of the Player's Box.

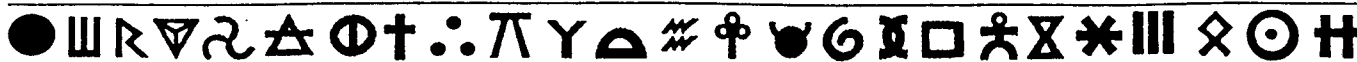
Gamesmaster's Box: An odd set. By itself, it's not only half a game, but it's the wrong half. No Gamesmaster would buy this without the Player's Box, unless he or she was an idiot. The only consumers that the set would be useful for would be those who bought the Player's Box first, and then wanted to go the whole hog. There may be gaming groups out there who are so communal-minded that the players bought their box and the gamesmaster bought theirs and they all lived happily ever after - but we doubt it.

Standard Edition: Aha! A kettle of worms, this. A valiant attempt to bring the price down; this is RuneQuest lite. But the same problem exists, that is, once they've bought Standard and if they like it then sooner or later they're going to have to get Deluxe anyway. To ward this off RuneQuest supplements have included Deluxe rules sections for Standard Players, but this is messy as this section is frustrating for those who already own Deluxe (and are thus paying for pages they don't need).

There are two possible solutions to this problem, apart from the status quo or dropping Standard RuneQuest altogether:

i) A Standard Edition Update could be produced, much like Games Workshops Advanced RuneQuest book. It might be annoying for players to have to look up information from two sources, but no more inconvenient than the current situation for Standard Edition owners. The Standard package would also work out a lot cheaper than the Deluxe Edition.

ii) Continue the with the Deluxe section for each supplement, but instead



of putting it in the text have it available from Avalon Hill. This would be free, with the consumer sending in an SSAE.

The Supplements: Overview

Discounting the different versions of the rules, from 1985-1990 Avalon Hill has published 19 supplements for RuneQuest. Averaged out, that's about three per year. In fact, in the last two years the rate has dropped to two a year. This hasn't been nearly enough.

Many of the supplements have failed to catch the imagination of the original RuneQuest players, who have seen them before.

Looking at the contents of the published supplements

	Box	Book
New Material	6	1
Reprinted Material	2	5
Useless Material	3	1

New and Reprinted are blurry categories; some of the new products contain old contents, some of the reprints contain new information. Our rule-of-thumb for the distinction between new and reprint is whether or not an old RuneQuester would feel compelled to buy it. By useless material, we callously mean products, in our opinion, of little use or value.

By our reckoning only 7 supplements have contained substantially new mater-

ial, one third of the total output, or about one per year. If we further differentiate between Glorantha and Alternate Earth there has only been one brand new supplement out for every one and a half years.

The Supplements: In Detail

Here we list the supplements released so far. The ones we have marked with an asterisk we think have been the strongest sellers (though this is based on guess work rather than actual sales figures).

Monster Coliseum

(box, useless, 1985): An arena combat supplement. The maps and components were handsome, but players were simply unlikely to get a lot of use out of it. The monsters had a lasting use, but at US\$16.00, the set just wasn't worth it.

Adventurers Sheets (Human)

(box, useless, 1985): The game itself provides you with character sheets to photocopy. This box was simply unnecessary, and Avalon Hill had to call a pad of character sheets "Supplement #2"!

Adventurers Sheets (NonHuman)

(box, useless, 1985): Of marginally more use than the human set, but still not really value for money.

Vikings*

(box, new, 1985): The first Alternate Earth supplement. A great set with

many hours of solid play available from it.

Gods of Glorantha*

(box, new, 1985): The first Gloranthan supplement. Indispensable background material.

Griffin Island

(box, reprint, 1986): Old adventures transplanted to a new setting; even so, people who had played Griffin Mountain were unlikely to get use out of this.

Land of Ninja

(box, new, 1986): Second of the Alternate Earth supplements. Despite its somewhat misleading title (the ninja are only a peripheral element in the game), a fine set. As the majority of players are accustomed to Eurocentric adventuring, Lands of Ninja was perhaps of less universal appeal than Vikings.

Apple Lane

(book, reprint, 1988): A classic adventure, but an old one. The first of the book releases, bringing the price of RuneQuest a little closer to the pocket money budget.

Snakepipe Hollow

(book, reprint, 1988): See above.

Into the Troll Realms

(book, reprint, 1988): The first of the trolls. Somehow the single Trollpack boxed set of 1982 was turned into four separate reprints.

RuneQuest Cities

Yes !!

We still have a few copies of this compendium of everything Staffordian available, in limited quantities.

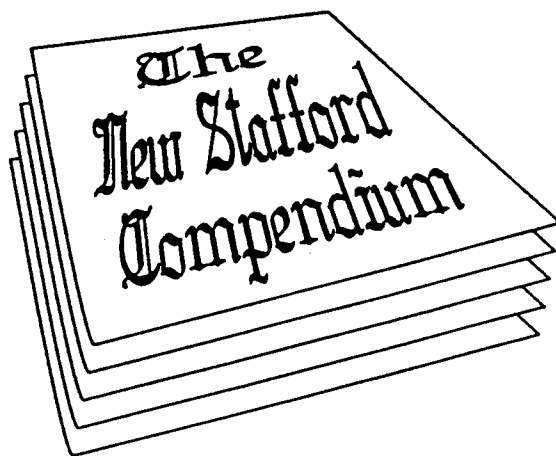
A vital reference for those interested in the mating habits of the Praxian lesser flanged mudwort.

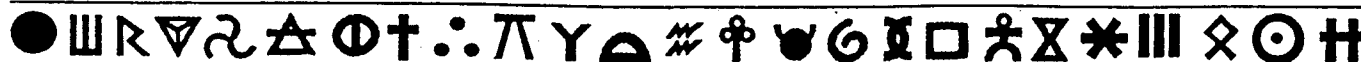
Llonquist Goodwrite, Sage of Lankhor Mhy

I thought the Maidstone Archers were a stonemasons cult specialising in the creation of doorways until I read the New Stafford Compendium.

Ranulph the Render, Hand of Than

This remarkable work is ONLY available from the editorial address, at a knockdown price of £1.50 + 20p postage (U.K.). Furriners amongst you should contact your local TALES megacorp rep. Your bookshelf isn't complete without it !





(book, reprint, 1988): Unlike the other reprints this supplement was not a RuneQuest one in its original publication. It's a useful book but not one that everyone would feel compelled to purchase.

(book, new, 1988): New monsters for Glorantha. A must for all Gloranthan RuneQuesters.

(box, new, 1988): The one everyone was waiting for, the strong launch that Gloranthan fans had been looking for since 1983. A great pack, rich in background detail.

(box, reprint, 1988): More trolls.

(box, new, 1988): And more trolls - but just enough new ones. This box was significant for the poor quality of its internal artwork. Prior to this Rune-Questers had been enjoying sound artwork and layout. Troll Gods eroded confidence in new products.

(box, new, 1989): Like *Glorantha*, a box fans were waiting for. But like *Troll Gods* it was marred by the awful artwork.

(book, reprint, 1989): The last of the trolls. Thankfully, the artwork had greatly improved.

(Card wallet, useless, 1990): This Gateway supplement was a great disappointment. The concept was unoriginal, the layout uninspired and the artwork poor. This has dealt a blow to the reputation of RuneQuest for quality supplements, and raises questions over Avalon Hills choice of manuscripts.

(format unknown, new, 1991): Another Gateway supplement, which we have not yet been able to review.

The Tales Eleven-point Plan for Productivity and Prosperity

It would be nice to show people what sort of thing they are getting for their money just by the format. Four formats already exist. We should categorise them and encourage submissions for them:

64-Page Books - Mini Campaigns/ Multiple Adventures: Books with background material sufficient to generate more adventures. The first part would paint the campaign setting and background, the second part would have one or more adventures as well as short ideas and hooks.

Boxed Sets - RuneQuest Expansions: The boxed sets would be used for larger background supplements, such as Gods of Glorantha and major campaign settings such as Vikings.

Cardwallets - RuneQuest Expansions: We are not sure about this substitute for the box set. Physically it is a compromise between the boxed set and the book formats. It is not appealing because of the lack of durability of the card wallet, nor is it as aesthetically appealing as a boxed set. However the card wallet is cheaper.

Of course Avalon Hill need not feel constrained by these formats. Perhaps there is room for a 24 page book of adventures! Maybe the old RuneQuest Companion might also be resurrected on a half-yearly basis. The important thing is to get the ball rolling.

Avalon Hill should stick to Alternate Earth and Glorantha.

Avalon Hill obviously have a better idea of how Alternate Earth is doing than we do. If it sells then it should be kept, but new supplements must be to the standard of Vikings and Land of Ninja. Generic and faceless "fantasy" products, such as Griffin Island and Eldorad are unlikely to satisfy the majority of gamers. We recommend Avalon Hill ditch RuneQuest Gateway. For their major fantasy line Glorantha is a strong, coherent and rich background world.

Recently Avalon Hill have been toying with the idea of turning RuneQuest into a sort of "RQGURPS", tailoring the Basic Roleplaying system to a number of other genres. We believe this is a dangerous idea, mischievous and distracting. Our main reason for opposing this is that Avalon Hill have been unable to produce enough support material for the fantasy genre, let alone divert resources to try and support new genres. Games die for lack of regular support material. Such a scheme would make Avalon Hill a bad Jack-of-all-Trades rather than a master of one.

It doesn't make sense commercially. Most people usually play the first game released in each genre. So if Avalon Hill want to make any real impression they will have to take a major financial risk and find a new genre. Otherwise they will be confined to the "me- too" market, forever in the coat-tails of the market leader.

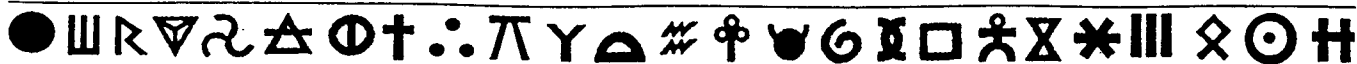
We suggest that Avalon Hill remains focused, and builds on the strengths and excellent reputation of Glorantha.

Production Standards need to be maintained

Component quality should ideally be upgraded in boxed sets. In all publications artwork, so important for the feel of any roleplaying product, needs to be of a consistently high quality.

The products have to be new

Reprints have their place, but let us let them take a back seat for a while. We'd like to see Avalon Hill publish some things we haven't seen before.



There should be a regular schedule

Releases should be monthly. People will become accustomed to expect a new RuneQuest item, and should know where to look for one. As it stands, it's just a pleasant surprise whenever one happens to appear. The various formats should be rotated around to give variety to the releases.

There should be advertising and promotional support

Avalon Hill will have to get out there and actively and physically invite people to play RuneQuest. Advertising should be constant and varied; reader have seen essentially the same ads for five years now, so they're unlikely to scan the fine print to actually see what's new. People should know what's coming before it hits the shelves; too often these things are a bolt from the blue.

There should be magazine support

Chaosium have recently been getting RuneQuest coverage in different magazines, which is excellent. Poor old *Heroes* was good in parts, but it was too specialised for anyone who didn't play the four systems it exclusively covered, and not specialised enough for anyone who did. Coverage does need to be continued in the non-house professional magazines, to keep the profile of RuneQuest high.

Perhaps the market could support a RuneQuest magazine? Or maybe not; perhaps a newsletter instead. Avalon Hill does need to get back in touch with the gamers. One means of doing this might be for Avalon Hill to provide assistance to *Tales* in some shape or form?

Avalon Hill needs to get writers writing

A great problem has been that there is nothing to publish. Promising teams of freelancers are yet to deliver, after six years. Subconsciously, it is our belief, they all think that one day the sun will burst from the heavens and RuneQuest will kick into high gear, and that's when they'll really get cracking.

Avalon Hill needs to convince them that time is now. They need to bombard freelancers with invitations to join new projects, send them regular newsletters, shower them with hints, hooks and handouts. To kick it off, at the very least Avalon Hill need to provide a submission guideline sheet, to tell writers exactly what they want, and how it should be presented. They also need to come clean on what their pay rates are.

Avalon Hill should look into other mediums

While staying with *Glorantha* and *Alternate Earth*, Avalon Hill could try cross marketing. Areas to explore might include RuneQuest novels, comics, board-games (repackage *Dragon Pass* to look like a supplement, reissue *Nomad Gods*), artbooks and miniatures. If they are able to maintain the quality, Avalon Hill can generate a lot of additional interest and excitement.

Avalon Hill should keep in contact with other publishers

What do the French want of RuneQuest, or the Japanese? They have an inbuilt advantage in that all products are new products to them. They also have resources and enthusiasm that Avalon Hill should tap into; for example, the French edition of *Genertela* is beautifully produced and illustrated.

Quality Control

RuneQuest is down for the count and on the ropes. To resurrect it, a great deal of work, energy and enthusiasm is required. The game really can't afford another product like *Eldorad*. Chaosium cannot give RuneQuest their full time, they have other games. Avalon Hill is the same, and they admit that they lack the expertise to work on it. RuneQuest is caught in the middle. It is no good producing a great quantity of supplements if the quality is poor.

Avalon Hill needs to be able to assess the suitability and appeal of the various manuscripts. The fact that *Eldorad* ever made it into print brings into question the quality control at Avalon Hill. Perhaps we were spoiled back in the Chaosium days when Greg Stafford supervised the development of the game. His devotion was evident in the high quality of supplements produced at that time. Now that Stafford is unavailable, Avalon Hill needs another person like him.

The Supplements: Summary

Background material enriches a game, and it is the quality of the background material on which the fame of RuneQuest is based. Nevertheless, players also have a need for something they can buy off the shelves, flip open the cover, and start running on a Friday night. Avalon Hill RuneQuest has had some releases of this type, but it has all been reprints. A common lament amongst former RuneQuest players is "We want to play RuneQuest, but there's nothing to play."

As games masters we have a need for things we can use with minimum effort. Over the last six years we have had no new commercial campaign to use (excepting *Eldorad*). Those of us who can, have had to use the 1982-3 material for background, or have written our own.

A campaign setting is needed urgently, which means detailed source material and adventures. For *Glorantha* this requires that the source material come first to point the direction for the adventures. Supplements such as *Praxpak* and *Sartarpak* are vital for this.

What Should be Done ?

RuneQuest as it stands is a great fantasy roleplaying game. It is as good as, if not better than *Rolemaster*, *AD&D*, *Middle Earth* and the rest. What those games have that RuneQuest doesn't is a torrent of new support material, on a regular basis.

Conclusion

RuneQuest has had an interrupted career. There have been a few decisions made that slowed it down. It still has enough of its own steam to survive. If Avalon Hill choose to stoke it up a bit it will pull them ahead rather than drag them behind.

RuneQuest needs a four star relaunch, because after seven years it still hasn't had the concentrated kick it deserves. Avalon Hill need to take the game back to the consumers and say "We are here! And we are great!" Avalon Hill need to tell them and show them in new ways, with new messages, and new material.



Esprit de Corps

Gifts and Geases for Humakt Allied Spirits

by Michael O'Brien



An allied spirit, according to *Gods of Glorantha*, "automatically qualifies as an initiate of the cult ... just like a normal initiate" (P 20) Ergo, it can be reasoned that Humakt allied spirits must take on a Humakt gift & geas, like all other good initiates of the cult. Below is an analog of the normal Humakt gift/geas table, for allied spirits.

A spirit must take one gift and its concomitant geas, and may do so in consultation with the Rune Sword (hereafter called "The master") whom it is allied to. The gift the spirit takes may be cumulative with those of its master (for example, both might have gifts which affect the same weapon). Humakti always house their allied spirits in their swords.

Gifts & Geases for Humakti Allies

gift

1. Begin a Sense Assassin skill at 30%.
2. Increase INT by 1 point.
3. Gain ability to Detect Undead by simply concentrating, at no MP cost.
4. Bless the weapon you are bound into to do double damage (once armour is penetrated) against a chosen foe species.
5. Bless the weapon you are bound into to do double damage (once armour is penetrated).
6. Bless the weapon you are bound into to do double damage (once armour is penetrated) upon striking a specified hit location.
7. Raise the AP of the weapon you are bound into by 4 points.
8. Increase the attack% or parry of the sword you inhabit by 20%.
9. Recover magic points at double normal speed.
10. Gain the Detect Truth spell reuseably.
11. Lower the Strike Rank of the weapon you inhabit by 1 (but the overall SR can never be lower than 1).
12. The sword you are bound into becomes a Death Sword as described in the Swords and Sorcery article in TOTRM 5.**

geas

Never participate in an ambush, even if your master does. In effect, you will not cast spells, lend MP, Heal or even use Divine Intervention for him during the ambush. In fact, the weapon you are bound into cannot even be drawn. If this is attempted the sword will shatter*.

Sacrifice 1 POW to Humakt each year.

Use no non-cult magic spells of any kind, even if your master knows them. You cannot even hold them in memory for him.

Never use or memorize spirit magic Heal spells. Furthermore, when unsheathed this weapon will register on Detect Enemy to all those of the particular species.

Never use or memorize any healing magic at all.

Never allow the weapon you inhabit to be parried with (if this is attempted, the sword will shatter).

Never permit poison to be used on the blade (if this happens, the sword will shatter).

Remain silent one specified day per week (this includes casting spells and communicating with your master).

If unsheathed, the weapon you inhabit must never return to the scabbard until it has drawn blood. (If an attempt is made to return the sword dry it will shatter).

Never let the liar go unpunished.

Always strike the last blow. (If the sword is returned to the scabbard without striking the last blow, it will shatter).

Both you and your master must sacrifice 1 POW each in a special ritual. the sword so enchanted must always kill if it is unsheathed. If an attempt to sheath it before it has tasted death is made it will instantly shatter. When unsheathed, this sword will register on Detect Enemy to the living.

* Particularly willful or dogmatic allied spirits may even attempt to disrupt the ambush or alert the targets; it depends on how much free will the GM allows allied spirits. As an example, in my campaign, a Lhankor Mhy sage PC belongs to the Free Educationists faction at his temple, yet his spirit ally is a member of the Exclusivists.

** This gift is only available from the Humakti subcult of Dilfin Doomfarer.



Humakt

God of Death & War

Mythos and History

Humakt is a son of Umath, the Primal Air. With his brethren, he pillaged earth and sky. But Humakt was different. Honour was to him as air was to the other air gods. When Eumal found the First Sword, Death, Humakt saw its use and with it slew Grandfather Mortal, opening the road to Hell for uncounted others. Orlanth, Humakt's brother, stole the sword and with it slew Yelm in a foolish quarrel. Humakt was outraged that kinship could cover the shame of theft and deceit between brothers and forever severed himself from kin to slay the possibility of such a deed ever recurring. Humakt then went seeking the true Sword.

He found it at the centre of the world, where the Monster of the Void gaped, devouring the universe at gruesome speed. Humakt slew the monster, making it possible for others to heal the wound it had made, but losing the Sword again. Seeking it, he took the road to Hell, and there found both the Sword and the Monster of the Void. Humakt crippled it so that Arachne Solara could overcome and swallow the Monster, hiding it forever. Humakt joined the Council of the Gods and used the Sword to shatter the Well of Death, restoring life to the world. Thus did Death serve Life and take its place in the song of the universe.

Humakt has maintained his position as a bringer of Death throughout recorded time. He is the war god for much of the world, and can be found on both sides of any conflict. He encourages honour and courage. The road to Hell is kept well-populated by honourable warriors.

Deceased Humakti look forward to a special section of the Underworld reserved for them to prepare for the Final Days, or at least the next full-scale War of the Gods. Humakt's worshippers are never resurrected. Humakti care little what happens to the corpses of their dead, save that they are treated with respect and not turned into undead. Members usually sing a song of victory over the grave or pyre, commemorate the dead with a feast, then move on, it is common practice to stick the soldier's broken sword into his grave mound.

Humakt is one of the most single-minded of deities. Death is invariably associated with this god, and he is sometimes

simply called Death. The other Runic power associated with the cult is Truth.

Cult Ecology

As Death, Humakt is universally recognised. Where actively worshipped, he is a god of war, and his temples sometimes also serve as mercenary hiring halls. Humakti philosophy does not believe in maintaining a body separated from its spirit. The forming of vampires, skeletons, and other undead-like creations is anathema. Gark the Calm and the vampire cult of Vivamort are particular targets of Humakt's aggression.

He is primarily worshipped by professional warriors and soldiers. Regiments of Humakti are important in the military forces of several nations. In some places, especially among primitive peoples, his aspect as God of War is greatly overshadowed by his aspect as God of Death, and he is worshipped by executioners, death-worshippers, and similar grim folk.

The High Holy Day, the anniversary of Humakt's birth, is Windsday, Death week, Storm season. Other holy days fall on Death week of each season, the days varying according to the elements. Thus, it falls on Waterday in Sea Season, Fireday in Fire season, Clayday in Earth season, and Freezeday in Dark season.

The Cult in the world

Despite Humakt's importance as Death personified, his cult has little political influence. Soldiers make up armies, but ultimate decisions are made by others - nobles and chieftains.

Humakt's main worship is in the Barbarian Belt of Genertela, and in Enklose and Vralos in Pamaltela. In some lands, he is recognised as a principle, rather than a being with personality. Cultures far from active Humakt worship often consider him to be an evil god, the antithesis of life.

Many military units have a regimental shrine to this deity. Units specially dedicated to Humakt have the equivalent of a minor or even a major temple. Worship is centred upon the regimental standard. Non-military temples are found in cities, with shrines in small cities and minor temples in larger ones. The largest cities may have major temples to Humakt. Humakt's shrines teach Truesword.

Temples are loosely organised. There are one or more Swords who run the temple and form a council to decide upon matters of import. Several initiates may permanently live at the temple. One important source of income for the Humakti cult is weapon training, and at least one Sword or initiate is always assigned to train non-cultists for profit. Temples vary considerably, depending on the native culture and the personality of its Swords. They range from a barracks-like structure and atmosphere to great cold halls of Death.

Initiate Membership

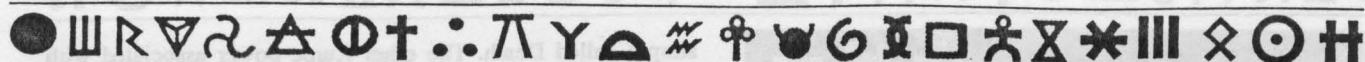
A candidate for initiation must have a sponsor who is both an initiate and a battle comrade of the candidate. The candidate must pass two tests, different from that of most cults. He must succeed in both a sword attack and a POW x 5 roll to be accepted. He then sacrifices a point of POW. A candidate for initiation must realise that a later refutation of his pledge involves reprisals from the gods themselves.

Special Humakti Skill

Sense Assassin

(00%)

This perception skill can only be gained by a Humakti gift. Success allows the user to sense that a nearby person (within 50m) intends to assassinate someone the Humakti is currently attached to, whether a family member, part of a temporary adventuring party, or a permanent fealty relationship, or even the Humakti himself. This sense does not tell the Humakti who the intended victim is, but does point out the assassin.



Special Divine Spells for Humakti

Detect Truth

1 Point

ranged, temporal, non-stackable, reusable

This spell allows the caster to tell whether anyone within a five metre radius of the spell's target site is lying. If lies are spoken, the speaker emits a dark, smoky glow visible only to Swords and initiates of Humakti.

Morale

1 Point

ceremony ritual, one-use, stackable

This spell requires an hour long ritual. It establishes a field around a regimental standard which gives an entire century (100 men) of Humakti initiates +5% to attack. It lasts until either sundown or sunrise, whichever comes first. Additional uses or Morale add +5% each.

Once accepted into the cult, the candidate must take a Humakt gift and accept a Humakt geas. Only one gift can be taken. Specially favoured initiates who have performed some heroic deed may be permitted to take on additional gifts and geases.

A Humakti must tithe ten percent of his current silver every holy day (many use this as an excuse to go on sprees just before the holy day). An initiate may not become a sorcerer nor a shaman. All Humakti must uphold the Code of Humakt. This means that a member must:

- (1) always fight other Humakti fairly
- (2) honour the fallen, and
- (3) maintain strict truth and confidence with one another.

Combat between members may continue only to the first fallen, not to the death, and the loser must always surrender a prize to the victor. This prize absolves each of any further obligations to the other, save in the usual course of cult functions.

Humakti temples serve as hiring halls for mercenaries, and arrange for healing of initiates. They offer room and board at a nominal fee if possible.

A cult member may not be returned from the dead in any way. He is considered to have been called by Humakt, and it would be sacrilegious to try to reverse the situation. Attempts to call back a dead Humakti either meet with no success at all, or result in contact with the Humakti - who will single-mindedly try to slay his summoner even if made into a vampire or mummy. A Humakti's corpse cannot be turned into a zombie or skeleton. Humakti may not object to the resurrection of non-cultists (though some do) - it is just not for Humakti.

A Humakti temple's staff generally includes several skilled swordsmen, who teach appropriate skills, including: Conceal, Craft/Armouring, Sense Assassin, First Aid, Orate, Ride, Scan, Throw Dagger and all sword and dagger attack and parry skills. Other weapons may also be taught. Each year, all initiates in good standing can receive free training from their temple staff. This is done at the rate of one hour of training for every two hours the initiate spends guarding the temple or working for its Swords.

Oath

2 Points

enchant ritual, one-use

Binds two to a pact. If they break the oath, they receive an attack of Sever Spirit backed by MP equal to the sum of MP placed into the oath to start it. The greater the oath sworn, the more MP are committed into the swearing. Thus, if two men each placed 15 MP into an Oath ritual and one later broke the oath, 30 MP would be matched vs his own MP, and if he was overcome, he would die. Neither participant need be Humakti - the spell can be cast by a third party cult member.

Sever Spirit

3 Points

ranged, instant, non-stackable, reusable

This spell acts as a sword to cut the bond between body and spirit of the target. The user must make a successful MP vs MP roll. If successful, the target dies. If unsuccessful, the target takes 1D6 damage to his general hit points, with effects similar to poison damage.

Turn Undead

1 Point

ranged, instant, stackable, reusable

This stackable spell affects one undead creature (skeleton, zombie, mummy, ghoul, or vampire) for each point sacrificed. The caster must attempt to overcome each target's MP's with his own MP's (roll separately for each target). Use the following chart to determine results.

Turn Undead Results

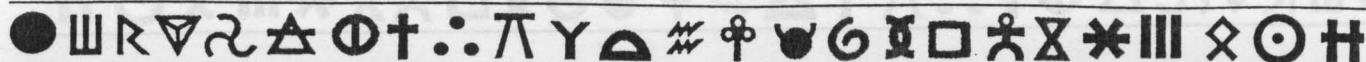
die roll	effects
result	
CRITICAL	Undead destroyed, released, or whatever.
SPECIAL	Undead paralysed and immobile for twenty melee rounds minus the creature's INT (skeletons are automatically inactivated for 20 rounds). Undead with INT's of 20 or more are inactivated for 1 round.
SUCCESS	The undead turns and flees, if possible. If not, the effects are as per a special success, above.
FAILURE	The undead is Befuddled as per the spirit magic spell. Skeletons are befuddled for 10 rounds - others for either 10 rounds or until they fail an INT roll, whichever comes first.
FUMBLE	No effect

An initiate of Humakt can use temple premises to teach cult skills, but 50% of all fees must be given to the temple. That 50% can be used to pay for training from the temple swordmaster.

Initiates may not sacrifice for the Humakti Rune magic of Berserk and Sever Spirit, unless they have proven themselves in some way. Cult members may never learn the spirit spell of Dullblade under any circumstances. If a member has already learned the spell, he must forget it.

Those that have been initiates for a full year can learn up to Bladesharp 4 for free, and more may be purchased later.

SPIRIT MAGIC: Coordination, Demoralise, Detect Enemies Disrupt, Fireblade, Heal, Protection, Repair, Strength, Vigor.



COMMON DIVINE MAGIC: all

SPECIAL DIVINE MAGIC: Berserk*, Detect Truth, Morale, Oath, Sever Spirit*, Shield, Truesword, Turn Undead.

NOTE: *Berserk and Sever Spirit should only be used after careful consideration on the part of the Sword.

Subcults

Spirit of Reprisal: The cult has one universal spirit of reprisal and that is Humakt himself. The gifts of those who become apostate or do not live up to the codes of the cult are removed, while their geases remain. Any cultist who breaks one of his geases (even unwittingly) is cursed. When such an accursed individual picks up a weapon, it instantly shatters. Unless the transgressor's crime has been grave (such as assassinating a benefactor or participating in a massacre of innocents) the curse only affects that weapon type in which the criminal has the highest skill

Hero Cults

Every temple, whether it be a paramilitary organisation or just a city shrine, has a shrine to at least one hero. Humakt's cult glorifies the valiant hero, and famous warriors are honoured at every holy festival. Most heroes merely add to the temple or regimental esprit, but some are the source of special magic, skills, or unique gifts and geases. The temple's defensive spirits (formed by Create Ghost) are specially honoured as well. Some typical hero subcults are described below.

Hiia Swordsman: This one-armed warrior from the Holy Country dwelt among the Grazelanders of Dragon Pass during the years between 1360 and 1390. He fought trolls, invaded the Lunar empire, and became adopted into the tribe as the mightiest Grazerlander of his day. Despite this, during his life, the cult of Humakt was minor among his adopted people. After his death, it all but died out. When the Feathered Horse Queen came in 1470, she revived the cult, transforming it into her personal bodyguard.

Today, all Grazerlander Humakti swear personal fealty to the Feathered Horse Queen and join the subcult of Hiia Swordsman. This cult is rather obscure, unknown outside Dragon Pass and the Holy Country. Members of it must never use poison in any form. It provides the divine spell of Strongblade.

Li Phanquan: This yellow-skinned warrior from Kralorela fought for the Empire of the Wyrms' Friends during its heyday. In a famous journey across the Wastes of Genert, he destroyed all the undead of the Wastes and wounded the chaos god Vivamort. Since his death and the end of the Empire, some unlife have returned to the Wastes, but his victory is still renowned.

His hero cult is found amount the Humakti of Peloria, Kethaela, and Maniria. Members of this subcult are required to seek out and destroy undead whenever they hear of its presence, even more than regular Humakti. The subcult teaches the spirit magic spell Detect Undead.

Hero Cult Divine Spells for Humakti

Stop Resurrection (Makla Mann)

2 Points

ranged, instant, non-stackable, one-use

This spell must be cast by a Sword on a corpse. It prevents any resurrection ritual from affecting the corpse, including those that form vampires or zombies. Divine intervention is not stopped by the spell.

Strongblade (Hiia Swordsman)

1 Point

ranged, temporal, non-stackable, reusable

This spell makes a sword or dagger blade unbreakable. Its armour points do not change, but no matter how much damage is parried by the weapon, its armour points will not decrease.

Hero Cult Spirit Spells

Detect Undead (Li Phanquan)

1 Point

ranged, temporal

This spell leads to the nearest Undead within range. 'Undead' means any reanimated body: ghouls, mummies, skeletons, vampires or zombies. It does not work on resurrected individuals.

Parry (Yan Starcere)

Variable

touch, temporal

This spell may be applied to any weapon. Each point adds +5% to the chances of parrying with that weapon, and adds 1 to the weapon's armour points. After the spell expires, the extra armour points vanish, which could cause a heavily damaged weapon to fall apart.

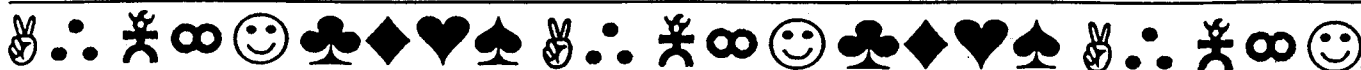
Makla Mann: This Sword defied his cult to accompany Arkat throughout the epic of the Chaos Wars. Cursed by his own cult hierarchy and hunted by Gbaji's evil assassins, he remained faithful to Arkat always. His name has become synonymous with the virtue of 'loyalty' for many Humakti, and he is a famous hero known even in lands that do not worship his subcult.

He is worshipped in Ralios and western Peloria, and his spell, Stop Resurrection, is available there. Humakti in this subcult may not accept healing from a member of any cult that teaches a resurrection-type spell (such as Chalana Arroy).

Yan Starcere: Untraceable in his origins, this wayfaring warrior travelled the length and width of Genertela during the Dawn Ages, holding off oppressors and righting ancient wrongs. His shrines always hold an image of his famous sword, Shatternot.

He is worshipped by Humakti everywhere. Members of this subcult must strive to be honest, even more than regular Humakti. The subcult teaches the spirit magic spell of Parry.

This is the official cult writeup by Greg Stafford and Sandy Petersen, and is copyright the original authors 1991.



TALES welcomes YOU to ...

LEGITIMUS LIGHTFINGERS CIRCUS OF WONDERS

by Steve Thomas

Scenario

"Legitimus Lightfinger, trickster and showman extraordinaire invites YOU to experience the excitement and spectacle of his world, nay universe, renowned travelling carnival! Hurry, Hurry, come and see the show.

THRILL at the antics of the silver age heroes as they struggle with the demons of legend. GASP at the ingenuity of the long lost Jruستي sorcerers and their mighty magics, and LEER at the vast numbers of naked and semi-naked young women available entirely for your delectation. Yes indeed, there's something for everyone: young women for the men, young men for the women, and young furry animals for the children. There is excitement, there is spectacle, there are feats of skill and daring, and there is plenty of free food and drink.

Come and see the fire jugglers, the tumblers, the acrobats and the exotic foreign dancers. See the ferocious monsters of legend, the heroes and villains of the God Time, and so much more... Don't delay, come today, a feast for the eyes, a feast for the stomach, and a feast for the soul. There's a whole world of wonder for all the tribe, ONLY at Legitimus Lightfingers carnival of miracles! Open this evening, in the Big Top outside of town. You can't miss it 'cause that's where it's at. So come along this evening, and bring your hearth mates along for a night that you'll NEVER forget!

Hurry, hurry, come to the circus..."

The characters will hear the above being produced at an incongruously loud volume by a small man in garish

(but very expensive) clothing, seated atop a gorgeously bedecked prancing white pony. Atop a pole flutters a banner depicting a golden Digitus Impudicus which seems to be beckoning those who look at it to follow him to the show. He is grinning widely as he rides through the town, calling out a never ending variation of the above in a surprisingly penetrating voice to any and all onlookers.

His enthusiasm is infectious, and after he has passed, any listeners are left feeling curiously excited, and with a restless desire to go and see the show.

That evening

If the characters decide to go and see the show, they will find a big top set up about half a mile outside town. The tent is circular, some 300 feet in diameter, and brightly painted and decorated. Outside, at the gate is the same small man inviting people in - Legitimus Lightfinger.

Tickets are a mere two guilders each or the equivalent in trinkets or livestock - there is a small pen behind him with one pig and several game birds in it. From within the tent come peals of laughter and gasps of excitement, mingling with the roars of wild animals, and the tinkling of crystal wine glasses. An enticing aroma of fine foods wafts in the air.

Entering, the show is everything that had been promised, and more. The big top, which is surprisingly spacious, is divided into several sections, each containing wonders greater than the last.

There are great, fierce, wild animals, obediently performing tricks under the supervision of gorgeously dressed



trainers. There are huge tables piled high with delicacies and jovial chefs encouraging people to eat and drink their fill. There are friendly and furry animals for the children, and exotic Pelorian dancers for the adults. There are dragonewts juggling great multi-coloured flaming balls and recognisable heroes of legend apparently (but harmlessly) destroying their enemies with exotic magics, and stunning exhibitions of weaponplay. There are acrobats and clowns, food and fine wines, and a small curtained off area into which young men are being enticed by virtually naked, and luridly decorated young women of stunning beauty.



Everyone is having a wonderful time, and the circus is thronged with cheering crowds and helpful assistants. Anyone can make use of all the facilities available, and almost anything which could be wished for is available around the next flap of the tents fabric.

Characters entering fully into the spirit of the carnival can have a superb nights entertainment, and eat and drink their fill. The circus goes on for as long as there are customers, and everything is free (after the two guilders entrance fee).

On leaving, the characters will feel tired but happy, collapsing into a deep sleep as soon as they lay down to rest. If any character had any especially exotic or interesting item upon them when they entered the carnival, they will find when they wake up that it is missing, although they remember having it with them when they left the circus.

If they return to the site of the big top the next morning they will find it deserted, as if the circus had never been there, and only a steady trickle of locals who have lost valuables.

On a succesful tracking roll, it is possible to discern the tracks of a lone horse heading off into the wilds, and following this will lead (eventually) to Legitimus, who is in posession of their items.

He will explain, in a cheerful manner, that the characters (and anyone else with them) had dropped their items whilst at the show, and that he was on his way to return them, but had taken a wrong turning and got lost. He will cast his Lie spell and the characters will believe him! He will give the characters back their items, and refusing any reward for his kindness, ride off into the distance, leaving the characters to be laughed to scorn by anyone that they tell what a nice man he is.

Characters not entering into the spirit of the carnival and casting spells such as Mystic Vision or Soul Sight will see that it is in fact all an enormous illusion, with people staring enraptured at empty air, revelling in non-existent food and drink, or (even more embarasingly) indulging themselves with non-existent members of the opposite sex.

Amidst this moves the chortling figure of Legitimus Lightfinger (the

only thing not illusory apart from the tent) who is obviously enjoying the antics of the punters, whilst he relieves them of any valuables which particularly take his fancy.

If challenged, he will use his Lie spell to tell the characters that they have obviously been bewitched into believing such nonsense, and that they should be exorcised by a shaman immediately (or by Blueface, the famous wandering shaman of the elder wilds, if a party member is a shaman). By the time the characters return from their wild goose chase, there will be no sign of Legitimus or the big top, only a crowd of locals who are locked in their own private hallucinations and cannot be reasoned with (unless a Dismiss Magic equal to their POW is cast).

Eurmal's Big Top

This is a magical artifact which Legitimus has borrowed from his patron deity for one night, and which returns to Him when Legitimus has finished with it. The Big Top has the following effects:

- Anyone entering the tent in a receptive state, has a Hallucinate spell cast on them, which lasts for as long as they are within the circus, or until the next morning, whichever is longer. Their Magic Points are used to power the spell.
- Anyone NOT in a receptive state must resist using their Magic Points vs the artifacts power of 30, or be subject to the spell anyway.
- Obviously food and drink are illusory, and people who have eaten will feel hungry next morning.
- People will wake up in the morning with one Magic Point and a sort of psychic hangover from an excess of magically induced excitement.



Legitimus Lightfinger

Male human trickster hero, age indeterminate, Initate of Eurmal.

STR 14 Move 3
CON 18 Hit Points 15
SIZ 12 Fatigue 32 - 4 = 28
INT 18 Magic Points
POW 21 DEX SR 1
DEX 27
APP 15

Location	Melee	Missile	points
R Leg	01-04	01-03	10*/5
L Leg	05-08	04-06	10*/5
Abdomen	09-11	07-10	10*/5
Chest	12	11-15	10*/6
R Arm	13-15	16-17	10*/4
L Arm	16-18	18-19	10*/4
Head	19-20	20	10*/4

Wpn	SR	A%	Damage	P%	Pts
Fist	6	81	1D3+1D4	81	Arm
Staff	4	81	1D8+1D4	81	16
Dagger	6	81	1D4+2+1D4	81	12

Dodge 120 - 4 = 116%

Rune Magic (96%) Reflect 6, Become Beetle, Illusory Sight 6, Illusory Sound 6, Illusory Odour 6, Illusory Substance 6, Illusory Movement 6, Charisma, Conceal 2, Group Laughter, Lie 2, Panic, Remove(Eye,Hand), Swallow 12

Spirit Magic (101%) Hotfoot, Befuddle, Countermagic 6, Demoralise, Fanaticism, Dullblade 6, (known by Joker) Glue 3, Lightwall, Mindspeech, Mobility 3, Second Sight, Shimmer 4

Skills: Throw 110%, Fast Talk 100%, Orate 100%, Sing 01%, Play lute 105%, Act 100%, Voice Mimicry 100%, Human Lore 84%, World Lore 74%, Conceal 106%, Sleight 119%, Devise 83%, Listen 75%, Scan 66%, Search 66%, Hide 110%, Sneak 120 - 4 = 116%

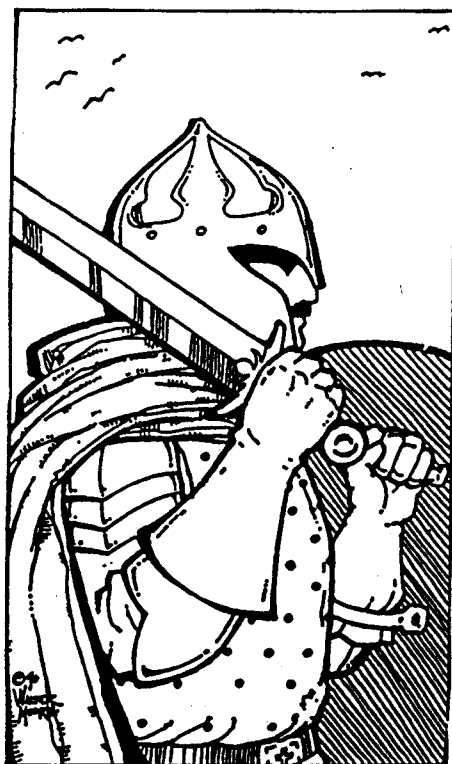
Ally: Joker (INT 18, POW 20) bound into green feather in swashbucklers hat.

Notes:

Legitimus has the following powers which he has gained through Heroquesting:

- All runespells are useable once per day.
- Permanent 10 point protection (this acts like Damage Resistance).
- Immunity to spirit combat (Spirits simply ignore him)

Quote: "Who, me ?? "



capital crime in Tarsh Wither was spared by the intercession of the Lunar provincial chief of liaison, Gordius Silverus, himself an amateur composer in the heptameter style. When Silverus heard of Withers imminent execution he passionately entreated the King to spare his life. When asked the reason Silverus is said to have replied, "Because that so long as Wither lived I could not be accounted the worst poet in the Empire." Chuckling the King spared his poet, but sent him into exile.

[4] Jaxarte needed only to go as far as our own temple library to find reference to the execrable Wither. A footnote in the Sisters of Inspiration's Concordance of the Master Poets notes that his work "...is mainly remarkable for its mass, fluidity and flatness. It usually lacks any genuine literary quality and often sinks into imbecile doggerel". As an example I need only quote the final stanza of his romantic epic "I Loved a Lass":

"She would me 'Honey' call.
She'd - O she'd kiss me too.
But now alas! She's left me
Falero, lero, loo."

[5] An intriguing aside: a poem with the title "The Defecoration of Harl" cannot be found as Withers in any of the authorities. Has Jaxarte given us a tantalizing hint of a lost work, or (as was his wont) was Wither about to quote someone else's version of this popular classical theme and claim it as his own?

[6] The harpooners invariably held target practice when a Lunar detachment was in town, presumably to show off Sun Dome military "prowess".

[7] The three great spears launched at the Giants Cradle in 1621 were said to be twice this length and tipped with obsidian points.

[8] Consulting Baythir Teen's Menagerie of the Outer Deep, I conclude the creature Jaxarte describes was a Narwhal, a whale-like beast rarely found in temperate waters. After the encounter at Harpoon it continued its way up river

fortunate enough to witness the machine in action.⁶

Several large kegs had been lashed together in the water and the gunners made a great show of lining up the target in their sights. A carnival crowd had gathered to watch the spectacle and all commented favourably about the skill of their lads on the cliff. I overheard one of our archers whisper to a fellow soldier that he doubted they would hit the water let alone the barrels, so I wagered Sir Geo a gold wheel they'd miss their target.

The crowd gasped as the great cord was slowly wound back and the first missile (fully 12 yards long!) was lowered into the breech.⁷ Then, just as the bolt was to let fly the horns of the watch-tower on the bluff began blasting a warning: a sea-monster had been sighted making its way up river! The crew of the spear-thrower answered their call and the crowd cheered. I thanked the goddess for my good fortune.

The excited spectators craned their necks to see a large grey-green beast coming round the bend, splashing and spraying through the water. The leviathan had a great fluted horn protruding from its nose, something like a unicorn. A couple of Yeloman warrior-women tried fruitlessly to convince the crowd of this fact but few people took notice, being too busy buying castings of the Farsee spell from a pair of canny vendors (who turned a tidy profit before the monster drew close). Finally the beast came into range of the machine and the crowd gave the gunners an encouraging cheer. There was a tremendous TWANG! and the great arrow lurched out from the machine, flew through the air in a graceful arc... and finally firmly embedded itself in the target-barrels. In their excitement the crew had forgotten to realign their sights. Sir Geo won his gold wheel after all.

Ronegarth

Our rafts arrived some two days after this unedifying display of Sun Dome marksmanship. The journey to Raus Fort was uneventful (thankfully the sea-beast had made its way further up river)⁸. By tipping the river-captain I contrived to gain a berth on the Lady Jezra's barge but Sir Geo followed my initiative and joined us. This proved to be a blessing in disguise because, in an effort to escape that crushing bore, Lady Jezra turned and gave me the benefit of her attention. By the end of the journey I was smitten.

The settlement of Ronegarth⁹ lies at the confluence of the River of Cradles and the Vilinar, atop a stony rise. As we approached I could see the banners depicting the Lunar crescent fluttering in the breeze and it heartened me to think that even here, deep in the wastes, had come the rule, justice and bounty of the Red Goddess.¹⁰ The Duke had built a small landing on the river bank and was waiting there for us to arrive. Lady Jezra permitted me to take her hand as she stepped ashore. "it is good to see a poet has such courtly manners," said Raus, taking his daughters other hand. Turning to Sir Geo (who had muddled his hose stepping clumsily from the barge) he asked, "And you, sir, must be the Imperial Commissioner?"

Sir Geo took advantage of my momentary confusion to solve the problem of our identities. As we walked up the hill I could not help overhearing Raus mutter to his priest Daryli that "the envoy has the youth and manner of a poet; the poet, the age and dress of an envoy!"

Despite his lofty titles I was warned by uncle that Raus, Duke of Rone and Lord of the Weis Domain, was in fact an exile banished to Prax by the Red Emperor for treasonous misdeeds.¹¹ But Raus had made good his misfortune and proudly showed me the layout of his town, which, in true Heartland fashion had been pegged out in a grid style. In one corner the Duke had reserved a site for his villa and the foundations were already laid. For the most part there were as yet few permanent buildings and most of the inhabitants still dwelt in tents. Safe haven against nomad and storm remained the fort, a sturdy stockade built of rammed earth and wicker, with towers of stone.

There was little time left in the day after our inspection of the town site and the Duke promised that his Chief of Mercenaries, presently returning from a bandit hunt, would show me the rest of the Domain in later days. We repaired to the fort where a feast had been arranged in my honour.

Raus' table was plain but generous and he ordered a keg of his finest Pelorian be opened for the occasion. Our hopes of a pleasant evening were dashed however



disgrace. Eventually they were dislodged by the Impala tribe who hold it to this day.

[22] The Healers' reluctance to cooperate with Jaxarte is understandable. His uncle goaded them into leaving Pavis by progressively removing their privileges. They were recently driven out of Horn Gate by Impala riders after a similar disagreement.

[23] "Buckled under", Humakti parlance for breaking ones gear; "switched blades", Humakti slang for a warrior who joins the rival war-cult of Yanafal Tarnils; "sliced two already", by this I assume Goslem defeated two opponents in death duels. A Humakti friend of mine assures me that a lottery sword would be quite able of cutting even a fully-armoured foe in half.

[24] Methinks if Goslem was truly honourable he would have stayed back and fought his adversary fairly rather than run away. A covetous man can rationalise anything I suppose, and only an Issaries over his money-belt is as covetous as a Humakti over his dress-sword.

[25] One presumes Jaxarte did, when he returned to the Heartlands. With encroaching senility Sir Anapiles mind and attitude softened towards the wayward Goslem and he returned to the family fold in late 1619. Goslem then formed the Grey Blades, an Humakti company serving as Lunar auxiliaries. His subsequent career is detailed elsewhere (see for example And Then There Were None Goslem's own account of how he slew or otherwise pacified his remaining ten adversaries). I shall only relate here the circumstances of his death.

In early 1624 the Gray Blades were ordered to storm the battlements of rebellious Bikhy and Goslem rashly swore that he would "take the walls or die trying." The attack was stalled by diplomacy but Goslem felt his honour was therefore compromised. He led his assault on the walls anyway under heavy fire from both sides. His famed weapon has since disappeared and the surviving Gray Blades formed part of a Danfive Xaron punishment legion.

[26] That Stumpy had one arm suggests he took one of the most powerful gifts, one which increases the damage wrought by a sword twice over, however, the most powerful gift needs must have the most costly gear. The taker cannot use magical healing at all. Thus, if a limb is lost, it is lost for good.

[27] Unlike Count Solanthos of Sun County, the Duke was happy to assist Jaxarte with his amendments to the census. Raus' personal survival depended on him keeping in Sor-Eel's favour, and no matter what population figure Jaxarte recorded Weis Domain was exempt from Imperial taxation for a period of seven years anyway. I quote Jaxarte's report:

Ronegarth

578 souls, including 41 of the Duke's own newtlings; seat of the house of Duke Raus of Rone, lord of the holding. Most of the inhabitants are Redlands immigrants transported here under the Governor-Generals forced resettlement plan.

Varna

102 souls. A small settlement recently established near Five Eyes Rise. Named after the Duke's late wife. Unlike the farmers of RoneGarth the inhabitants here were transported from Talastar.

Weis.

59 souls. Inhabited by wretched indigents who speak their own crude dialect. Plague carried off

brother won fairly but his disgruntled comrades retained the right to challenge him for the sword. It didn't take Goslem long to realise that soon enough he'd either be dead or without his cherished blade. Neither prospect thrilled him much and he decide to leave Esrolia taking the mighty sword with him (it was only after he told me this that I noticed it was chained to his wrist).¹⁸

Drawn to Pavis, as many are, by tales of loot abounding Goslem gave up adventuring to work for the Duke and, after the original Chief of Mercenaries was killed fighting the newtlings, filled the position.¹⁹ Once Raus saw that he was right for the job he offered my brother Lady Jezra's hand.

Weis

As we rode into the squalid hamlet of Weis the sullen inhabitants came out of their filthy huts to stare. As Commissioner of the census I was required to call and head-count, but although Goslem sought out the headman - a shambling lout with a pocked face - I couldn't make myself understood. Neither could I understand his babble, a curious mix of many tongues.²⁰ I tipped the oaf a silver which he promptly misunderstood and pushed forward his toothless daughter. Goslem laughed, kicked her back and started rounding the wretches up. Plague had swept through the village several years back and only fifty-nine souls remained.

Horn Gate

After Weis we left the farmlands of the Domain and made our way across the desert to the Horn Gate oasis - the westernmost limit of Raus' territory. Although nominally the Dukes Horn Gate is actually controlled by whatever nomad band happens to be holding it. At present it is our Sable Rider allies, and they provided us with a safe escort across the wastes.²¹

To the parched, weary, saddle-sore rider Horn Gate comes as a delightful sight. Behind white walls lies a lush garden of date palms, green grass and cold water. The inhabitants (strangely blue-eyed and speakers of a tongue unknown anywhere else) seem happy with their lot, even though the insufferable Sable Riders like lording it over them. A band of White Healers have also taken up residence here, and, although polite, were reluctant to talk to a Lunar official.²² also located within the bounds of the oasis is an ancient holy place shunned by all A great cavern, it is said to run underground for miles.

My brother and I spent a restful few days there, sampling the fruits of the oasis (dates and grapes being the main produce). We were all set to return to Ronegarth when one of Goslem's men arrived. Taking a spare mount the hardy fellow had made a quick dash across the desert, making a four day journey into two. Dodging a morokanth ambush and chased by a band of sprinting Agimori he had come to tell Goslem that "the one-armed man in black" had arrived at Raus Fort and was seeking him. Upon hearing this my brother visibly paled and instinctively grasped the hilt of his sword. "They've caught up to me", he said. Who were "they"?

"They" were Humakti who had entered the lottery with him and lost. "they" wanted Goslem's sword. "They" would have to kill him a duel to get it, and Goslem wasn't going to give them the chance. With his loyal companion Goslem decide to strike south, turn due east at spirit mountain and make his way down Bilos Gap to the river and Lokazzi. From here it was a short raft ride to the port of Corflu where he hoped to get a boat somewhere.

I didn't want to lose my brother after missing him for so long, and I couldn't believe he planned to run. "why can't you fight him Goslem?", I asked, ignorant in the ways of Humakt.

"You don't understand kiddo", he replied. "There were fourteen in the lottery. One's already buckled under, anothers switched blades, I've managed to slice another two, which makes nine to go.²³ I just might be able to do in Stumpy, but after him they'll just keep coming. Eventually I lose."

"But what about the Duke?"

"He knows I'm a wanted man, running from something."

"Well, what about the Duchy, ...Jezra? Can't you just hand it over to him and stay. It's just a sword!" There were tears in my eyes.

"Don't blub kid", said Goslem, as he packed his saddle-bags. "It bites me to give it all up, I can tell you. Especially Jezra. But this is a matter of Humakti honour. I

Alebard's Quest

By Bill Keyes

**with additional notes
by Greg Stafford**

Greg's Notes

[1] Terminology has changed since this game. What Bill calls the Spirit Plane is, actually, the Hero Plane now. This game occurred long before I recognised the separate planes.

[2] 1980.

[3] This was an early version of how Will worked. Determining how and what Will was supposed to be was one of the major problems with early heroquest rules.

[4] Londra had her complete character stats published in issue #11 of Wyrms Footnotes.

[5] Adventures around this artifact took up a lot of my early campaign. Details were first published in Wyrms Footnotes #9, and later in Troll Pak.

[6] This adventure took place before I had clarified the relationship between Humakt, dead and undead. Now they would be called Temple Spirits rather than ghosts.

[7] Bill does not tell that Ugrurur was a baboon. He eventually got quite famous despite considerable human prejudice. He started the Xenogang, a band of mercenaries which allowed anyone except human beings in it. We usually played the Xenogang when I was not

Greg Stafford and his crew spent a long time building up to this quest. I heard about it when Steve Perrin mentioned it. At Grimcon I was invited to take my two Humakti along.

The basic idea about heroquesting is to go onto the Spirit Plane¹ and try and gain a power or two, besides the usual chances for experience and power gain rolls. If you gain enough powers you reach the rank of hero. The exact rules are only now² being written and tested. This run was an introduction to the spirit plane for us. Before I get onto the quest, let me explain about the Spirit Plane a little. When a person travels with his body to the Spirit Plane he enters a region with different rules.

There is no real time on the Spirit Plane, but living creatures entering from a time after the great compact induce a pseudotime upon the region around them. You cannot call for Divine Intervention on the Spirit Plane. You are your god, in effect, and you represent him there. Instead each person has a certain amount of Will³, which they can use like Divine Intervention to impose their own will upon the spirit plane. A character gets one point of Will for each three points of power (1-7 for humans), one point of Will for each 50% level reached in the best five of the cult skills (a Runelord with 100% in five cult skills, either fighting or non-fighting, would thus get 10 points of Will), one point of Will for every five points of Rune Magic sacrificed for, one point for each cult you are an initiate of, and one point for each cult you are a Rune Lord or Rune Priest in (thus a Rune Lord-Priest would get two points). The highest total we had was 28 points by Londra.

One uses Will in two ways, either as a Rune Lord with Divine Intervention, rolling to see how many points of Will are gone, with a 95% certainty of getting what you want, or as a Rune Priest with Divine Intervention spells, risking X points for a X times 10% chance, where you don't get what you want you don't lose the Will. If you are on the spirit plane and lose all your Will you can never leave it. Most beings on the spirit plane, including most gods, used up all

their Will long ago. If you lose all of your hit points on the spirit plane you don't die, you just start losing power. If you lose all power you are permanently gone. Now to the quest.

I took Jonathon Trollsbane and Jondar Blackmane, both Rune Lord-Priests of Humakt. Our leader was Londra⁴, a Humakt Rune Lady-Rune Priestess, who was the High Priestess of the Temple of the Wooden Sword, by virtue of the fact that she owned the Wooden Sword⁵, which was a Humakti artifact with a 30 POW spirit, plus a number of former temple members bound as Ghosts⁶ into the sword. Greg Stafford gave this out some time ago, and Londra used it to found her own Humakt temple. Our fourth Humakt Rune Lord-Priest was Errol Silksword. We had two Humakt Rune Priests, Naimless and Alebard. Tagging along was Apattar, Orlanth Rune Priest; Madlan, Umath Rune Priest; Ugruril⁷, Daka Fal Rune Lord; Genevieve Le Clerecq, Orlanth Adventurous Rune Priestess; and Urug⁸, who worshipped his gold coins, and had an IQ of five, one less than his horse. All of these except Ugruril and Urug were also lay members⁹ of the Humakt cult.

The object of the quest was to accompany Alebard back in time to Godtime and enter the spirit plane and travel to the spot where Arroin fought a creature of Chaos. There Arroin might lose some healing powers and Alebard would get the chance to gain one. We also had such a chance, if we were lucky. On the spirit plane, if a God uses a power and fumbles, the power drains away and other nearby may gain it. Also, if a God is wounded while using a power it may bleed away. So we all gathered together and prayed to Humakt and we were transported back in time and space to the Spirit Plane in Godtime, specifically at Six Stones¹⁰. We left on the Humakt High Holy Day. If we were successful we would return the same day.

We took the Jackal's path from Six Stones, headed towards the Frostwood¹¹, where Arroin dwelt with the elves. The Spirit plane is dark¹².

Greg Stafford's Response to Bill's Tale

I had almost forgotten about this game until I read this article. It was part of my original RuneQuest campaign - note the date of publication. It was also one of my first attempts at running a herquest.

Many things have changed since that run, and rather than give the wrong impression I would like to annotate the article to keep things in perspective.

The Wooden Sword flew above us shedding light¹³, and we knew that the road we travelled was safe, but it was dangerous to stray from it, although we couldn't see where the edge was. The first "day" we saw in the distance a Tumblewood, a whole forest tumbling towards us blown by a wind. Jondar, having come up through the ranks as Jonathon's squire, did what all soldiers know well to do, he got out a shovel and dug a foxhole to hide in. However it wasn't needed. Madlan, the Umah Priest, used his Control Weather Rune Spell to turn the wind, and so we got through that situation.

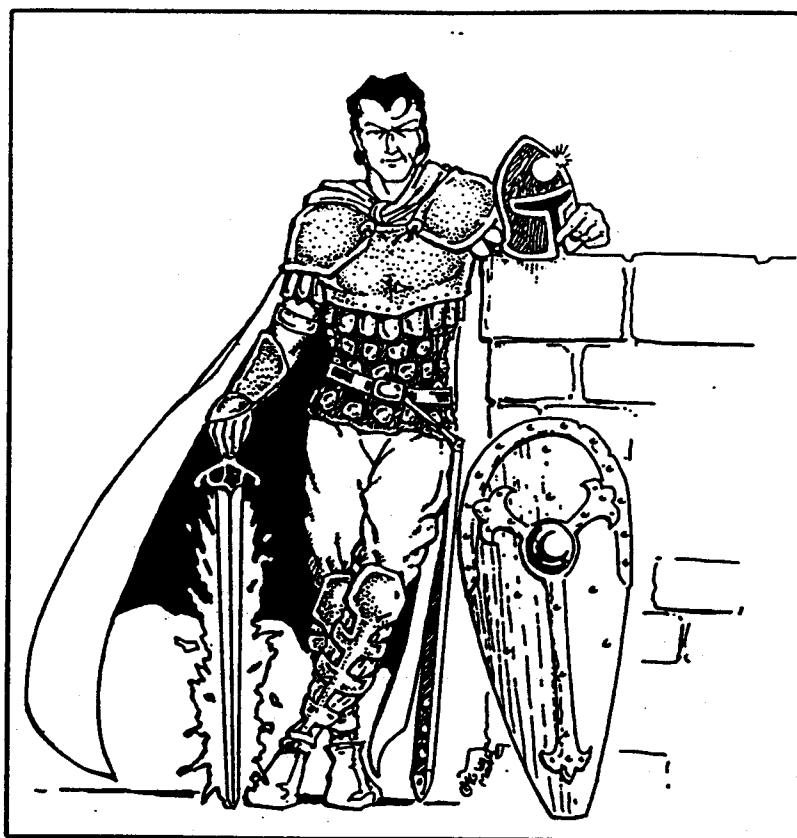
We slept and walked and slept again. On Day 3 a glowing green object fell from the sky and landed just off the road. It detected as magic and looked like an oversize green elf's brain, probably from some dead Elf God. Heeding the instructions about the road we continued on our way. The next day we heard a sound like breaking glass, and then we saw up ahead a rain of large bronze bones. We investigated and found two magic crystals left over when the dead gods blood congealed and crystalised. The next day was uneventful.

On Day 6 we had our first fight. We saw two statues of Hounds; one bronze and one brass. Jonathon detected Life and located several hidden sources off the road. These turned out to be four more hounds and Rortow the Hound Master.

Rortow fired a bow at Ururg, hitting him, and Ururg charged, thereby leaving the road. He and his horse were met by two dogs as the others appeared and attacked us. These were Blink-Dog-analogues; each round they would blink out and then reappear to attack the next round. Alebard went to help Ururg. Londra sent off some spirits from the Sword to help and used Rune Magic. The rest of us fought. Jonathon got people to form squares to prevent the dogs from blinking behind people. It was a long fight but we eventually won. At the end another figure turned up. Jonathon tossed another spell at it (Demoralize) as it was looming over Ururg and Alebard, who were near death (only the Vigor spells on them were keeping them alive). It turned out to be a Chalana Arroy Angel, who was offended, slept Jonathon, and left.

We reformed and kept going, after healing Alebard and Ururg. On the Spirit plane you do not recover lost power unless you can rest in a holy place or temple. As we were bringing our temple with us, all we had to do was stick the Sword in the ground and rest for a day¹⁴, but we elected to press on. The next two days were uneventful.

On Day 9 we saw a dustcloud. Madlan used his Control Weather again, and the dust blew away, showing a stampede of bison-like animals. Jonathon estimated that we could outrun the herd



and pass by the point where they would cross the path, so we all ran for sometime and evaded the herd, and then rested.

The next day we were jumped by three Chaos Leapers. One came up the road from behind. Jondar mind spoke it, found it hostile, and killed it with a composite bow shot which had Blade Venom 20¹⁵ and Multimissile 4 on it. He went to investigate and two more leapt onto the road. Jondar killed one with his second arrow which was similarly treated (the spell done by his allied spirit), and Jonathon killed the third the same way, after it had missed hitting Jondar from behind.

On Day 11 we reached an Oasis, where shreds of darkness dripped from the trees. We proceeded down a black tunnel formed by these trees and came to the Gorge of Terror. The Wooden Sword formed a magic bridge over it and we walked across, each making a dexterity roll of a given difficulty depending on our status in the Humakt Cult. Everyone linked themselves to the Humakt Runelord - Priests and we got across.

We reached the Frostwood and rested, regaining power and some Rune Spells. Then we found (or were found by) the elves and Arroin. We went with Arroin down to the third level¹⁶ of the Spirit Plane to fight the chaos creature. It showed up as a group of identical humanoids, one to each of us, including horses. We managed to kill it (it took over 400 points to do it), but Alebard

GM and we drank a lot of beer. My favourite character was Larry the Gorilla, whose INT was about equal to mine with too much beer inside me.

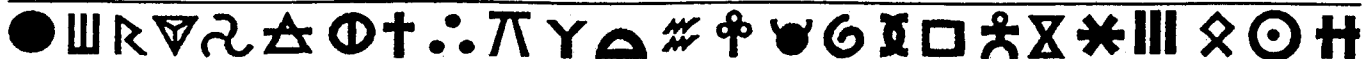
[8] Ururg (or Urrgh, as it is in WF) was an experimental character: half-troll. Small, ugly, and stupid, he figures prominently in the history of the Sazdorf Ruins.

[9] Now anyone going along on this Humakti heroquest would have to be an initiate. Lay membership was less clearly defined in those days.

[10] A landmark in Sartar which co-exists in the Middle World and the Hero Plane. Note that Londra, in WF #11, has the Six Stones Heroquest Ritual as a spell.

[11] This is another name for the area called Winterwood. It is the stronghold of the Green Elves during the Great Darkness.

[12] Well, at least it is dark in the parts of the



Hero Plane where most Humakti quests occur. The entire journey depicted here, in fact, is typical of the regions through which Humakti heroquesting travels: war, destruction, fear, and death. Other parts are quite different.

[13] Actually it was "not dark" but neither the players or characters were likely to understand that so I skipped the details.

[14] I grew to dislike this aspect of the game I made because it made things too convenient and easy for the player characters. Eventually the sword was given back to a more powerful Humakti who claimed it. I later decided that such mobile temples were so rare as to be nonexistent, and that the temple population had to be higher than the band which hung around the Wooden Sword. And that such a mobile restorative was contrary to the nature of heroquesting altogether.

[15] I hate Blade Venom, which I consider to be a totally artificial game construct made for game lawyers and min-maxers. If you wonder why it wasn't in later RQ, it was because I said to drop it.

[16] I am not sure what this meant. Obviously we went "deeper", probably into what is now the God Plane.

[17] This chance occurrence of a 01 roll on the Hero Plane "activated" a member of a long-extinct race which showed up in the later Cradle scenario from Pavis.

[18] This was a deliberately useless, but interesting, thing which I had given the players about six games earlier. They carried it around and tried to identify and use it without any luck, and struck upon it here by luck. The benefit of becoming Elf-friends was an unexpected side benefit.

was down to 1 point and both horses were hurt. Arroin healed them all but didn't fumble. He critical healed (01) Alebard, and Alebard used his Will to use this to gain the reusable use of the Rune Spell Heal Body (it only cost him one point of will).

We returned Arroin to the elves, and did our ritual to return to the material plane, arriving at our destination the same day we had left. We all gained something from the trip and as luck would have it we lost nobody. One other thing of note was the time when Ururg prayed as usual to his gold, rolled a 01, and was answered by a vision by the Wheel of Wheels¹⁷. Five golden leaves appeared among his hoard (he carries 7,000 wheels with him). They were identified by the Elf King as healing leaves. We also found that a magic moving stick we had was one of Aldrya's fingers¹⁸, which the elves accepted with

great reverence. We were all made Elf-Friends, and guaranteed friendship by all elf groups.

It was an interesting introduction to heroquesting.

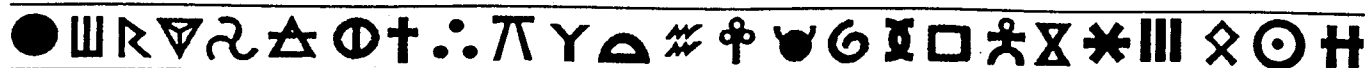
This article originally appeared in Dragons Past #7, 1980.

Key to Rumours

T	True
F	False
M	So general as to be meaningless.
R	May or may not be true at the referee's option.
B	Generally true but also has a substantial false component.
A	Too awful to even think about !

RUMOURS

1. Runes and religion are very important in Glorantha. You only have to look at the shape of towns to see this: Grazelander towns have round walls; the Sartarites have square walls; and the Lunars have round walls, with a wall down the centre, one side for the rich and one side for the poor! B
2. Those of you with *Cults of Prax*, *Nomad Gods*, or the *RuneQuest* 2nd Edition Rulebook, open the book to the page with the map of Prax and turn it sideways so that Pavis is at the top of the page. Now look carefully at the Eiritha Hills. M
3. Tada's High Tumulus is only place where back copies of *Wyrm's Footnotes* can be found. T
4. There is a mountain, called the Top of the World, in the Western Rockwood Mountains that is said to be the tallest in Glorantha. From its peak you can fly or jump to the Red Moon. T
5. In a manifestation of the cataclysmic Hero Wars to come, Falagian Diamonds have suddenly become almost worthless, as all across Glorantha their powers have been mysteriously forgotten. T
6. *Tales of the Reaching Moon* is negotiating with *Argus Publications* to become their new fantasy games magazine. R
7. The next scenario pack from Avalon Hill will be based around the quaint Medieval town of Jotenheim (see *Heroes Vol II No.3*, The Black Sorcerer). The existing Martial Arts Training Centre, Sword Factory and Drug store will be incorporated into a extensive medieval shopping mall complete with Hose, Tabard and Doublet boutique, drive-in Dungeon, a branch of *Horse-shu-while-U-wait*, and a *Burger Baron* franchise. All of this is to be situated upon the aptly named 4th Street. A
8. Urrggh the Ugly is alive and well and living as a child minder. T
9. The national musical instrument of Sartar is, unfortunately, the Bagpipes. B
10. Only seven people on Earth know the secret of the God Learners. When fourteen people know then the Third Age of Glorantha will be at an end. B
11. To be initiated into the cult of The Storm Bull at the Block in Prax one must first climb the Block and then jump off, reciting all the myths of Storm Bull backwards before hitting the ground. B
12. No character has survived very long who parried instead of dodging. F
13. The existence of Grotaron in Glorantha is a really good idea. R
14. The Lunar Empire, though self-sustaining, does import exotic foodstuffs, such as Kralorelan spices, an unusual type of sweet Fronclan deer meat, and Big Macs. B
15. The Rhino Riders of Prax are noted for the ferocity of their mounted charge, even Pikemen and Agimori may not prevail against them. T
16. The next Gloranthan releases will be *Dorastor*, *Sun County*, *Praxpak* and *The Hero Wars*. B



again with new ones. Thus for the players to be able to keep the same characters for as long as possible it is important that their skills levels only improve slowly (this also applies to statistics).

I am fundamentally against any system that speeds up the characters' progression as it will reduce the amount of time which they are playable for, even though the players will at first enjoy the quicker improvement. MOB's system of skill improvement is imaginative and innovative but it increases percentage improvement for no apparent reason. I would prefer a system which kept the improvement amounts the same (or less) but allowed lesser improvement rolls for less expert teachers.

I would suggest keeping a d6 for experience, d6-2 for masters of the skill, and introduce lower increases of a d4-1, d3-1, d4-2 or d2-1 for less experienced teachers. An alternative system (both logical and simple) is to allow anyone to teach any skill to someone with a lower skill percentage. The increase roll will always be a d6-2 but the teacher would have to make a skill percentage roll in order that the student is taught successfully. Thus less able teachers would succeed less often and get bad reputations.

If the teacher fails to teach the student may still attempt an increase roll (similar to research) to improve by the usual d6-2. This could be made even more interesting by allowing automatic maximum (of 4%) on a critical success and an automatic decrease of d6% on a fumble. One further twist is to introduce the teaching communication skill (base chance 5%). The teacher must also succeed in a teach roll for the student to learn successfully, otherwise the student must attempt an increase roll as per training.

I think that a system similar to this was published in *Different Worlds* some time ago. I can state quite categorically, as a university lecturer, that people who know their subject are not always good teachers and that teaching ability is a separate skill which must be learned. Whether everyone can learn to be a good teacher is a question which I cannot answer, and could equally well be applied to any other RuneQuest skill.

Divad Llah, Chalfont Park Sanatorium

What's all this about training being cheap, then? Hah! All I can say is Mr. O'Brien's bloody lucky to be able to get any training at all! Where I come from Skill Masters don't grow on **BLOODY TREES**.

What's all this about spells being cheap then? Not only is Mr O'Brien bloody lucky, he's a bloody **GBAJI RIDDLING GOD LEARNER** as well!

The only way you'll get 225 points of spirit magic for 6,750 lunars is if you join a **HELL** of a lot of religions! I'm only a poor Orlanthi, and 95% of spirit spells are **TOTALLY PRICELESS** to me! What's more of a pain is that Mr O'Brien is not only a filthy rich multi-denominational superhero, but he's got some kind of a thing going with all his priests. My priest is always too busy to spend all his time teaching me loads of spells, and I turn up at the **SAME** shrine **EVERY WEEK** !!

What's all this about sorcery, then? Why is everyone so obsessed with sorcery? New spells, new rules, new loopholes, it's never ending. And you know what they all complain about? They say it's too powerful, a sorcerer in a adventuring party gives them too much of an advantage. What I want to know is : **WHAT THE HELL IS A SORCERER DOING MESSING AROUND WITH A BUNCH OF NO-HOPERS LIKE P.C.s ?!!**

Why isn't he studying for year after year with his master, or snoozing over some esoteric book (or magazine), or advising his local knight, or looking after the spiritual needs of his peasants, or earning his daily bread in a civilised fashion? So what spells do these weird PC sorcerers have, then? Y'know, really useful ones like Teleportation, Damage Boosting & Tapping, the sort of ones that **KILL** people!

I ask you, do sorcerers do anything else in Glorantha apart from **KILLING PEOPLE**? Do they never eat? How do they eat? Ahh... they **KILL SOMEONE WITH SOME FOOD**.

I tell you I'm never going anywhere near the Western lands - it's far too dangerous.

*I must apologise for these rantings.
However until I get some decent letters*

of comment I will be forced to give rein to Mr. Llah's strident views. Now back to our fave debate..

Simon Phipp, Lower Stoke

I am sitting firmly on the fence. Like Phil Murphy, I am a Glorantha fan who would love to see articles on the Myth, Legend and HeroQuest rules with descriptions of Gloranthan places and cults. However, I am also a realist and know that many people prefer new spells, magic items and scenarios with lots of stats. To make money or even to break even, you will have to expand the scope. If that means using other systems or general role-playing articles then so be it. As long as it remains primarily a Gloranthan magazine then I'll continue to buy it.

I have to disagree with the argument that a diverse coverage of systems by magazines is good for sales. Looking around it seems to me the successful mags are the ones that concentrate on what they do best.

Steve Gilham, Cambridge

On the issue of going for the big circulation - I saw this one about ten years back in *A&E* (current circulation c.100, ten years ago c.700) - and for all the benefit in physical quality that would give (less so now than then due to advances in DTP technology), I don't think that any labour-of-love amateur 'zine could survive the transition intact.

Matthew Porter, Wickford

Why do people write in saying that you should put in stuff that is non-Gloranthan? What is the point, it would be next to useless for most of us.

You've got a point there...

Errata

Inadvertently, the Spirit Magic spells available to Gagarth worshippers were left out of issue four, only being noticed by the editor when he was trying to roll up a Gagarth Gang.

They are: **Bladesharp**, **Demoralize**, **Mobility**, **Slow**, **Speedart**.

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As part of my duty to fandom I'll be presenting an Irregular zine review column. Not that there will be much in the way of reviewing. So if you know of anyone who produces a zine point them in my direction. D.H.

Black Mole #3.

December 1990, A5, 16pp. 20p or SSAE. Produced by Gareth Jones who also runs the Oberon Mole Postal Games Emporium. Mostly chat, scenarios (including RQ), reviews and short stories. The regular "More about Arthur" feature is of interest to Pendragon enthusiasts. Excellent value for money! Address: 346 Willington Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 8HJ

perChance #4.

January 1991, A5, 32pp. 70 pence. This issue has a scenario for *RuneQuest*, and a generic Horror scenario, as well as a Judge Dredd article, and fiction. From: Jim Johnson, 44 Hillcrest Drive, Doagh Road, Newtownabbey, Co Antrim, BT36 6EQ.

Aslan #10.

February 1991, A5, 60pp. £1.50 (inc. p&p). Probably the best discursive RPG zine around these days, with plenty to get the old grey cells going. This issue discusses amongst other things, Deities in gaming, FreeForm gaming, Tiered Games, The Perfect Game, Reviews, and has lots of entertaining chat and opinion. From: Andrew Rilstone, 10 Marlborough Grove, Fishergate, York.

Alarums & Excursions.

Monthly. 8.5" x 11, 100-150pp. A&E is one of the oldest surviving Roleplaying APA's or Amateur Press Associations. The APA format involves a number of people sending individual fanzines to a co-ordinator who compiles them and mails them out to the circulation. A&E is more open than the typical APA, since there is no requirement to contribute, and there is no requirement for the contributor to have access to duplication facilities. In essence, it's a vanity press. You write what you like. you can write comments on other zines (turning it into what has been described as a Play by Mail cocktail party), or hold forth on a wide variety of gaming related topics. The contributors include some well known names in the US rolegaming field, a number of them published authors, as well as more ordinary gaming enthusiasts. The content is very broad, and tends to vary over time as fashions change. Staples are write-ups of interesting campaigns, convention

reports, game, book, film and TV reviews, game philosophy. The games under discussion vary the most - the cyberpunk boom is fading, AD&D and RQ/Glorantha tend to keep ticking over in the background as the survivors of the genre, while the recent *Ars Magica* and the up-coming *Amber RPG* are sources of lively controversy. Subscriptions costs postage (air is \$4.86, surface \$1.34 and about ten weeks), plus \$1.50 if you did not contribute to the previous issue. Contributors to the current issue pay nothing above the contribution costs (and get airmail postage). Lee will accept cheques in £s Sterling drawn on UK bank accounts, and deals strictly in cash up front (Antipodeans and Europeans must send \$US). From: Lee Ann Gold, 3965 Alla Road, Los Angeles, CA 90066, USA." (From Steve Gilham)

The Wild Hunt.

Almost Monthly. 8.5" x 11", c.75pp. TWH is another US APA gaming zine. Similar in content to A&E, but here Cyberpunk shows few signs of fading. In the past the zine was a hotbed for *RuneQuest* stuff but these days there is only the occasional campaign write-up. However, recently (#156) in a throwback to earlier days, Steve Marsh produced his version of the *HeroQuest* rules. US subscriptions range from \$3.90 book rate to \$5.40 first class. Overseas subbers should sent a \$10 note and ask for as many as that will buy (sea mail). This should give you enough of a taste of the zine for you to decide if it is for you. From: Mark Swanson, 40 Bow Street, Arlington, MA 02174, USA.

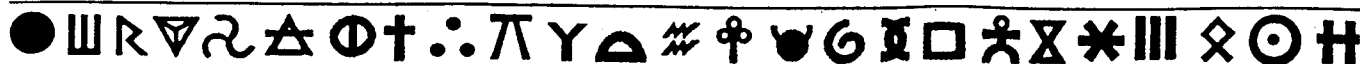
The RuneQuest Digest.

Volume 6, Number 1

This is a computer bulletin board run from the USA, so you'll need access to a computer and modem! It is rather like an APA zine with *RuneQuest* related contributions from various subscribers. The content is mostly rules ideas, variants and news, but more recent issues have been dominated by Gloranthan source material such as cult write-ups and clan descriptions.

The RQ Digest is free for the asking to anyone with an electronic mail address reachable from Internet (a world-wide network of academic and commercial computers). Just send an e-mail message to bell@cs.unc.edu to become a subscriber.

The sheer volume of digest stuff may mean that you want to check with your system administrator before subscribing or requesting back issues. Since Digest issues are freely redistributable, distribution via photocopies or computer discs is not merely condoned, but heartily encouraged. Contact: Andrew Bell, 135 Mallard Court, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 27514, USA.



This Love Business



By Oliver Dickinson

If you hang around Loud Lilina's for any length of time, you will get a chance to meet with a wide range of interesting characters. You can meet prospectors, and Rubble Rangers, and crap-shooters, and serious drinkers, and agents for all kinds of causes, and more adventurers with daffy notions than you can shake a stick at, but you will rarely see an entertainer, and why this is nobody knows. Some say that no entertainer is going to get heard over the racket in there, especially when Loud Lilina is laying into someone who wishes credit, while others maintain that the customers' habit of throwing mugs at acts they do not like will be trying to the nerves of sensitive artists, but I figure it is because Loud Lilina will wish a cut of any proceeds, for very little comes for free around her joint, even floor space. So the customers generally provide their own entertainment if they wish for some, and Lilina does not yet think up a way to charge them for it.

Now one fine evening when there are still a few in the joint, a guy I never see before slides in, and it is clear at a glance that he is an entertainer, because he carries a dinky little lute with him. He looks over the floor, and strikes a pose on a patch that is not too dirty, and cries, "Hearken to the lay of Litennor the Tuneful." Then he starts in on some stuff about everlasting love and all that. But the customers in Lilina's are not great fans of love ditties, preferring songs with a bit more zing, and pretty soon Old Gil, who is a most interesting character and is often pointed out to strangers because he lasts in Pavis for as long as he does, which is maybe twenty years, heaves his mug at this Litennor. But this is not his first mug, or even his second, and so he misses by a wide margin. Now Hanufa, who always gets into Lilina's nice and early to get a start on her beer drinking, is watching this Litennor with interest, and she seems to resent mugs being thrown at him, for she swings her left arm backhand and knocks Old Gil halfway down the room.

"Give the guy a chance," she yells, and watches Old Gil for a moment to see if he is wishing to take the matter up. But Old Gil has no such intention, which is one reason why he lasts such a very long time in Pavis, and so she turns back to this Litennor. "Sing some more, handsome," she says, "No one else is going to bother you." And Sweet-Talking Shamus, who is in a sentimental mood because his latest doll heads off into the wilds on a quest, says, "Sure, and I like a love song now and then, and I will put in with Hanufa on this." So we all have to listen politely, for no one is going to argue with characters who are as handy with their fists as Hanufa and Shamus.

The guy does not sing too badly, at that, if you like love songs, but where Hanufa gets this handsome stuff I do not know, for in my judgement he is not such a guy as will turn the head of many dolls. He is long and thin, with a

pale worn-looking face, and washed-out blue eyes, and limp hair the colour of straw, and a scraggy little beard, and he is by no means young, but Hanufa is regarding him as if he is Derenx the Handsome at least. She applauds every song very loudly, and gives us dirty looks if we do not show some enthusiasm, and Litennor will have to be very dumb not to perceive that she takes quite a shine to him, and few guys are that dumb. In fact, she must fall plumb through to the basement, for when he stops for a rest and she offers him a drink, he asks for wine, which is an expensive drink anywhere in Pavis, and Hanufa does not blink, but orders up the best in the house. Then she engages him in earnest conversation, but what she says I do not know, because she gives me a very dirty look when I try to listen in.

Well, you may figure that this Litennor owes Hanufa plenty of much-obliges, at least, but he acts off-hand to her and scarcely says a word, though he smiles now and then. But Hanufa is so fond of gabbing that she does not seem to notice and continues to regard him with admiration. Then suddenly he clutches his brow, and cries, "Alas! I forget to take a collection. How shall I get a bed tonight?" and more bewailing of his sad fate in a manner that is most revolting in a grown man, even if he is an entertainer. But Hanufa tells him not to worry and takes the hat around, and no one dares to refuse to offer something except Shamus, who shows her an empty purse and winks, and she grins back and lets it go. But since none of us has more than a few clacks to rub together, she does not collect much, and so she says to Litennor, "Listen, this dump is no place for one of your talents; let us go elsewhere." We all expect Loud Lilina to get mad at this, or at least demand a cut of the take, and are hoping to see fur fly, but she makes no move, maybe because she does not wish to antagonise such a good customer as Hanufa.

But as it turns out she loses her custom anyway for a time, for we hear later that Litennor claims we have no soul and that he will not return, and while this is a great relief to us, who never claim to have any soul and will not know what to do with it if we do have some, it is surely a blow to Hanufa, who rates Lilina's beer most highly. But to show you how daffy she is about the guy, she gives up coming to Lilina's to go about with him, and in the following days we hear various reports of them being thrown out of this joint or that, for she is forever urging him to display his talents, and while it seems that he often makes some excuse she keeps pressing him, and he has to sing a few times to keep her sweet. So they get the bum's rush from some joints, and are politely but persuasively asked to leave others that are more high-class, and the watch generally move them on when they offer street performances. Litennor seems to take all this better than you will expect, but it is all very wearing for Hanufa. Though she is no sucker in a fight the same can be said for many

others around and about, and when she objects to criticisms of Litennor she sometimes winds up receiving more than she dishes out. But she sticks with him, and undoubtedly this is a severe case of love as far as she is concerned.

Now at this time Griselda is not seen about much, but one day she pops into Lilina's and says to me, "Do you have a name for this specimen that Hanufa is consorting with, and how does it come about?" She seems to be displaying some excitement and so I give her all the information I have, and by the time I am done she is looking most disgusted, but she only says, "Him!" and goes marching out again. Since this looks promising to me I attempt to follow discreetly, but she must have eyes in the back of her head, for she whirls round when I am a whole block away and tells me to get lost. Naturally I do this, and so I will never learn what comes off if I do not happen to see Sweet-Talking Shamus drinking with Hanufa two or three days later. They are both looking as if they are in quite a fight, with black eyes and bruises and such, but they seem quite pleased with life and with each other. This cause some speculation at Lilina's, but no one has any information to explain it, and we are expressing annoyance at our ignorance and surprise at this state of affairs when in comes Griselda, and she is looking pleased in her way. When she hears what we are talking about she brings her drink over and sits down. "I can explain how this comes about," she says, "for it is my doing, really, but it is going to require some mention of this love business, so if anyone feels that this is likely to make them ill, they better leave." But we are all wild to know and press her to continue.

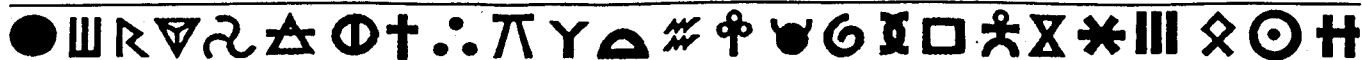
So Griselda leans back and takes a swig and starts off, "It is maybe twelve years ago, when my cousin Beladonna is still young and impressionable, and I am even younger and just beginning to learn my way around. This

Litnorr blows into Alone, our home town, and he is quite a handsome guy then, and not bad as a singer, and Belladonna falls for him at first sight. But his is not a classy act, so he cannot get in the good joints, and he is not popular with the public in the joints where he can get employment. So Belladonna and I constitute ourselves his management and protection, and because Bella packs a pretty neat punch even then and furthermore, because we belong to a family that has a lot of influence in Alone at all levels of society, we are able to ensure that he gets a hearing. We can do nothing about his takings, of course, because our family will not countenance our trying any sort of shakedown on the audience, for they do not wish any heat to develop with the local law, when things are running so smoothly, and besides, such behaviour has no class at all.

"Well, you will have to be blind not to see that Belladonna has a case over Litennor. In fact, I seldom see a worse case in my career, and if only some sorcerer can work out a way to tap what she is putting into it, he will be able to heat a whole town. The worst of it is, she can never work up the nerve to say anything sensible to him about it when they are together, but just looks at him and gasps, even though I give them plenty of privacy. In those days I think this love business is for the birds, and there are times when I think so still, but I want Belladonna to have what she wants, for I kind of hero-worship her in those days. But this Litennor does not behave as if he has any idea of how Bella is feeling.

"For a while I give him the benefit of the doubt, but I watch them from a discreet distance, and I begin to notice how he is very careful about moving his hand before she can accidental-like bring hers into contact with it, and always manages to produce some distraction when she looks as if she is working up the nerve to speak of her sentiments. Finally I become convinced that he is stringing her along, because of





course she is providing most of his support out of her allowance, but to be sure I bring my brother Ferdy in on it, because Ferdy is all wised up over this love business even then, while my elder brother Rory acts as if he does not know what the word means. He agrees with my analysis of the situation, and we decide that something will have to be done. It is no good just telling Bella, because she already gets an earful from her parents, and my parents, and also our aunt Elfrida, all saying that this Litennor is no good to her, and if anyone will know it is our aunt Elfrida, who sees plenty of men in her line of work as a highly respected priestess of Uleria; but Belladonna displays great stubbornness over her attachment. So we go to our aunt Elfrida, and cook up a scheme to have one of her best initiates dress up like some rich dame and try and put the come-hither on Litennor, for we reckon he will go where the money and the looks are.

"Well, the initiate does her bit beautifully, but even when she suggests Litennor come up and see her some time she gets no reaction, and so she reports that she feels that she is wasting effort, and also that Belladonna is giving her looks that make her fear for her health, and furthermore that she is suffering great anguish from listening to all the glop that he is singing. Now our aunt Elfrida is one very wise bird, and she suggests that the initiate make a real play for Litennor and get her hands on him, and Ferdy and I are to make sure that Belladonna will not do her harm.

"So at the next performance the initiate rushes up to him immediately after he gets through with his last number, before Bella can even get her legs out from under the table, and cries, 'The singing is fine, lover, but now what about some action?' and throws her arms around him and starts applying some hearty kisses. He starts yelling and struggling, and Belladonna gets past us and hauls her off, yelling 'Unhand my man!', and it looks to me as if the initiate is very glad to let go. Then Bella starts in trying to calm him down, and puts her hand on his arm; but he rears away, crying, 'Get your hands off me, both of you! I just cannot stand being mauled!', and he grabs up his lute and takes it on the lam. Well, Belladonna realises from this that he is not for her, and maybe not for any doll, come to that, but it breaks her heart anyway. While I stay there with her to explain, Ferdy rounds up some of the gang that we hang out with and they chase Litennor clear out of town, pegging rocks at him, and none of the family comes across him again until now."

Then she takes a long pull at her drink and it does not appear that she is going to say any more, so I say, "It is a most affecting tale, Griselda, but you do not explain how come Hanufa is now drinking with Sweet-Talking Shamus and why they are both looking bunged up, but happy about it?"

"Oh, that," she says. "Well, obviously I figure that Litennor is up to his old game with Hanufa, getting himself supported without giving any return, but I do not wish to make any wrong moves, for after all the guy may change. So I get Hanufa talking about him while he is resting in her room one day, and it seems the poor dear puts so much effort into his art that he needs plenty of rest and quiet, and she cannot expect too much of him but is happy to have his company when he is out and about, and I have half a mind to leave her to it for being such a sucker. But then again, I feel maybe I will settle

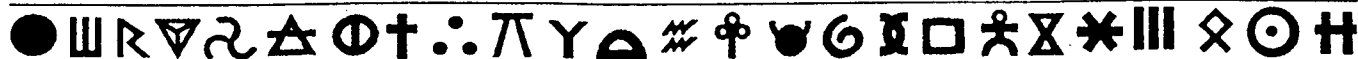
this Litennor's hash once and for all, since I do not approve of his way of going on and he gets off very lightly for what he does to Bella, when you think about it. So I cook up a variant of our old scheme, but this time I bring in Sweet-Talking Shamus for a little dough. He is to insult Litennor all around and show him up for the coward that I judge him to be, or else pound the stuffing out of him if he shows fight, and I go along to square Hanufa.

"Well, we come upon them in the Reed Inn, where they can still get a hearing because the dead-beats there do not care to challenge Hanufa, and I must say Shamus puts on a first-class performance. He marches up to Litennor, crying, 'Do you know what it is, that is a crime against the human ear you are perpetrating, and I cannot stand it any more', and more of this nature, and when Hanufa rises to intervene he pushes her back into her seat, telling her to stay out of this.

"I aim to prove', he says, 'that this guy cares so little for his chosen art that he will let me insult it,' and here he grabs Litennor's lute and smashes it on the chair, amid cries of approval from the patrons of the Reed Inn, 'and furthermore,' he says, 'that he is yellow clear through, and what else will you expect of a fellow that lets a woman do his fighting for him?'

"Well, Litennor looks as if he wishes to ignore the whole thing, but Hanufa hauls him up, crying, 'Come on, you cannot let this go. Let us settle this big hunk,' and she pushes Litennor towards Shamus with one hand while stepping aside to take a poke at him with the other. But Shamus swings at Litennor, and while it is not the best he can do it is a fair punch, which knocks Litennor right into the path of Hanufa's swing, just as if he plans it that way. Believe it or not, they manage to bat him to and fro between them a time or two more, while the public goes wild with enthusiasm, until he collapses, and then they start in on each other in earnest, because by this time Hanufa is blind mad and Shamus is also slightly heated, since one of Hanufa's swings reaches his left ear. I step over just as Litennor is hauling himself to his knees and advise him to favour Pavis with his absence, and once he gets a good look at me it is amazing how fast he is able to move. But nobody is taking any notice of him, for Shamus and Hanufa are putting on as fine an exhibition of fisticuffs as you will ever wish to see, and in fact they are demolishing half the joint. But nobody seems to care, because they are making more room for the spectators this way. Finally Shamus holds back on his swing and says, 'The jerk runs out on you, Hanufa. What are we fighting for?'

"Who cares about him?' cries Hanufa. 'Let us fight for the fun of it', and she pops in a fast one over his guard. 'Damn right!' he replies, popping one back, and so they carry on a bit longer until Hanufa holds up her fists and says, 'What about a beer instead?' and Shamus voices complete approval of this suggestion. I offer to buy one, since in a way I am responsible for the fight, and we go along to the Hoplite's Home, since there is really nothing of the Reed Inn's bar left, and I explain to Hanufa all about this Litennor and that she is well rid of him. Hanufa agrees on this, and furthermore says that she is much obliged to me, as she has the best fight in ages, and she proceeds to top this by having what I suspect must be one of her best drinks in ages too, though I leave them to it after an hour or two. And there you are: when two characters find that they have so much in common, maybe this is love."



And finally, the results of ...

The Tales Questionnaire

Many thanks to all of you who filled in the questionnaire. Apparently the response was very good, according to those who know about response rates and the like. And I didn't even have a competition.

In total I received back 91 replies, which is 27% of the total readership. However this figure masks the world-wide split which is:

United Kingdom	31%
Australia	24%
USA	24%
Europe	17%

Good to see the Brits out in front. It reminds one of the glorious days of old. But, I say, bad show on those Europeans! Buck up!

Moving on, everyone spelt their name correctly, but many of the replies to the Sex question were either unprintable or too flippant to be given credence here. The main statistic to become apparent was that only two women owned up to reading the zine, and one of those was a fix.

I don't know how many people lied about their age so I can't tell you with full confidence that there are no octogenarian RuneQuesters, but I reckon so. Ages ranged from 14 to 48 with an average of 25.5. For the statisticians amongst you:

AGE	NUMBER	%
14-16	3	3
17-20	7	8
21-24	30	33
25-29	34	37
30-50	16	19

I'll leave the incisive analysis and conclusions to be draw by yourselves.

Hint: We're getting older.

Readers occupations gave me a few shocks. Horrifying though it is, some

22% of readers work as computer programmers / analysts, and another 28% are students. But luckily only a few Accountants owned up.

The average hours spent on RuneQuest was also interesting. The highest figure was a staggering 30 hours a week, though there were more than half-a-dozen over 20 hours. The average was 7.15 hours per week.

The average number of people reading each copy worked out to be 1.61. This means that globally 537.74 people read Tales. Not bad... but I still wish I'd gone to three decimal places.

The different rules systems used were:

RQ2	20%
RQ3	43%
Hybrid RQ2/3	35%
Other	1%

Only one person used a different system (Pendragon). It's interesting to see that there is still no overall consensus on rules.

I chose a representative selection of supplements to see what people had access to - whether owned or not:

RuneQuest (2nd Edn)	93%
RuneQuest (3rd Edn)	96%
Gods of Glorantha	91%
Glorantha: Genertela	92%
Cults of Prax	86%
Cults of Terror	79%
Pavis or Blg Rubble	73%

I found it quite surprising that such a high proportion of readers owned these supplements.

Magazines. In the end I gave up counting the issues, and so the stats presented here relate to ownership of one or more issues of the mag:

Wyrms Footnotes	59%
Different Worlds	56%
Heroes	54%

On average owners of Wyrms Footnotes owned issues 10 to 14. Only four readers owned all 14. Some 82% of you wanted reprints from these mags; those who didn't usually had them already! RuneQuest settings used were as follows:

Glorantha	93%
Alternate Earth	14%
Other	28%

Avalon Hill take note!

Use of the Gloranthan timeline:

Very close	46%
Pick and choose	48%
Not at all	6%

Referees outnumbered players by three to one. On the thorny issue of other articles, 31% were happy with non Gloranthan RuneQuest articles but only 13% wanted non RuneQuest articles. 95% were generally happy with the zine as it is.

Lastly, the moment you've all been waiting for! The fave article from issues one two three. Contrary to the misinformation by the Aussies in issue four the roll of honour is:

1 Holiday Glorantha:	
Adari	22%
2 Ancestor Quest	19%
3 The Cult of Geo	9%
4 Heroes	8%
4 Jaxarte Whyded	8%
4 Serious Money	8%
5 Hop Wars	6%

Congratulations to all the authors, especially Oliver Dickinson with 1st place and joint 4th!

Well that's all. However after a few more issues I'll probably do another questionnaire, so let me know if there is anything you thought I should have asked! I may even try and find Mr/Ms RuneQuest!

Next Issue

The Cult of Maran Gor by Greg Stafford and Sandy Petersen, The Broken Earth, The Chronicles of Khafre-Menes, Pendragon, and much more - Don't miss it!