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ENCLOSURES: DAMOCLES MISSION game counters; Feedback card.

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Muse

More for You!

We've decided that three games in *Ares*™ Magazine just won't fly. So, as a bonus, and at no extra cost to subscribers, we will have four games each year! There will be a small price to pay for the extra game, however. The issues with games will now appear quarterly, starting with this issue of the magazine; *Ares* magazine nr. 14 will be mailed in May, nr. 15 in August, nr. 16 in December, and so on.

In addition, there will be two semi-annual special editions of *Ares* Magazine per year that will be available in the summer and winter (the production schedule is still being worked on; more news in the next issue). These issues will not contain games, but will include special game support articles. Thus, there will still be six issues sent to subscribers each year, but now there will be more games.

This decision was based on extensive sales analysis which indicated that the non-game issues, which we had expected to support the issues with games, would not have sold as we expected. The TSR distribution system is much wider than Simulations Publications' and will eventually place the magazines in areas where they have not been before. The expected retail sales will offset the extra cost of the additional game appearing in the magazine.

As much as we would like to have continued the magazine with a game per issue, there were two reasons why we could not. First, a cost breakdown of producing six games for the magazines indicated that the yearly subscription rate would have had to be doubled. Simulations accepted a loss on each issue, which was written off as advertising expenses to promote the boxed products; both *Ares* and *Strategy & Tactics*® magazines are now part of Dragon Publishing, a separate division within TSR from the games division, and now must make a profit on their own. Neither magazine is cheap to produce. In addition to payments for editorial contributors to the magazine, there is the expense of having a designer create the game for the issue. Likewise, in addition to the cost of printing the magazine itself, there are the expenses involved in producing the maps and counters — the unit cost of these two items is more than that for the magazine proper. One method we've found to ameliorate the cost of the game is to split expenses with the games division; the larger the printing run for the components, the lower the per unit cost. Since some of the issue games will be boxed and sold separately, we will be able to reduce the production expense by running both printings at the same time

Second, the process of churning out 12 issue games per year is extremely time-consuming and can lead to incomplete development (a.k.a. turkeys). The games for *Ares* magazine in particular require extra graphic and design time since the game systems and components are so different

Cover illustration by Tom Mandrake.

(continued on page 11)

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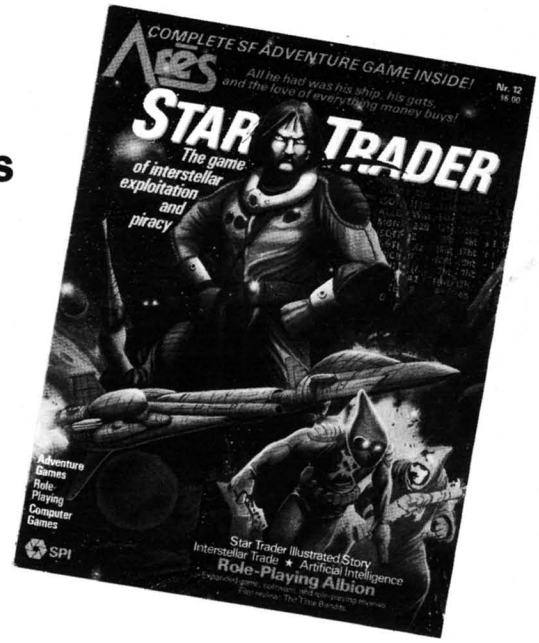

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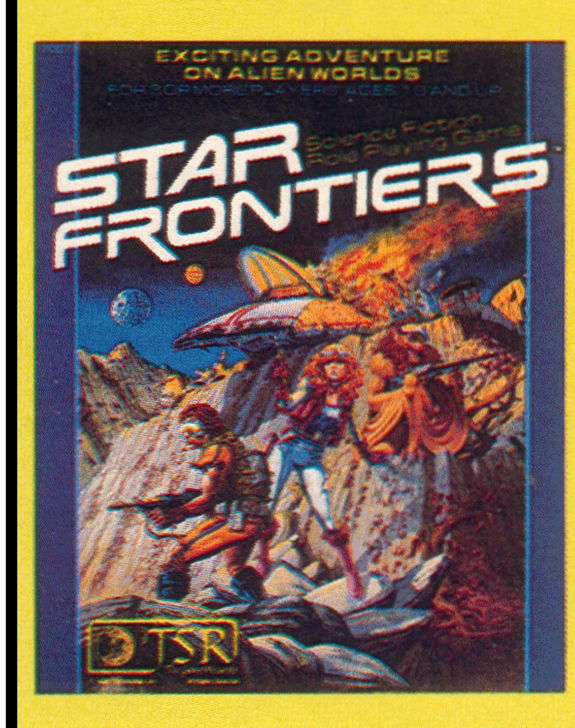

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DAMOCLES MISSION

Story by Timothy Zahn
Illustrated by Timothy Truman
based on a concept by
Redmond A. Simonsen

ABSOLUTE TOP SECRET: *The following transcribed excerpts of the oral log of Colonel Patrick McDowell (USN) are to be seen by authorized personnel only. Failure to comply can result in a prison term of forty years and a fine of one hundred thousand dollars.*

BACKGROUND: *On 15 September 1988, a dark, spherical object approximately 1.2 kilometers in diameter of unknown origin assumed a geosynchronous orbit over the Galapagos Islands. Upon orders of the President, an investigating shuttle mission was configured (code name **DAMOCLES**). The Space Shuttle **Discovery** was lifted off on 2 December 1988 at 0613 hours. The crew consisted of two regular shuttle astronauts and four scientists. (See Section VIII for crew profiles.) After using the low-orbit refueling system (LORS), the **Discovery** climbed to 36,000 kilometers and matched orbits with the unknown object on 7 December at 1413 hours, docking with it at 1820 hours.*

Compilers notes: In the following, the number in parentheses denotes time after rendezvous with the alien object.

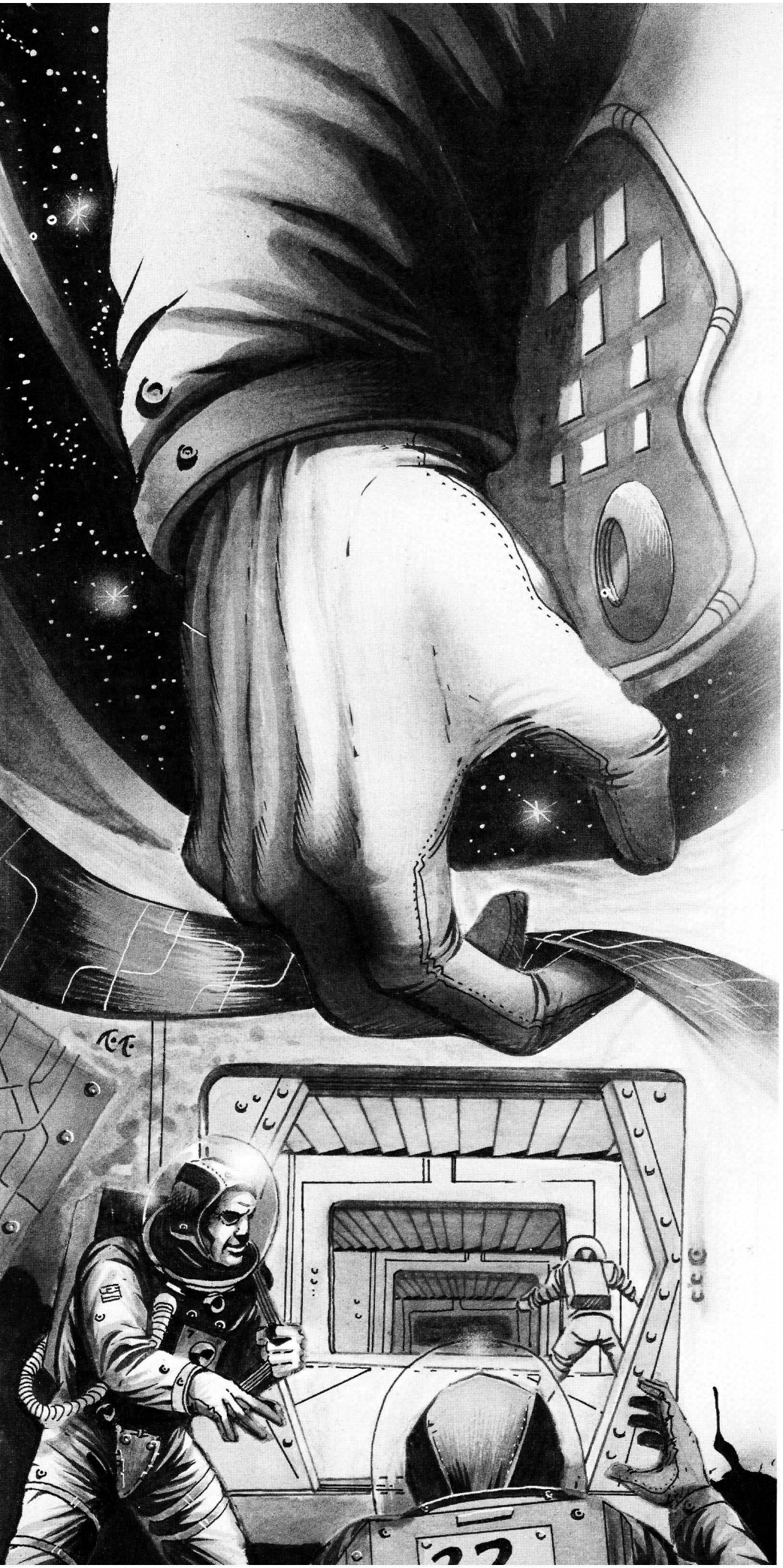
(0:05) Well, we're here — and if anyone still has doubts, they can put 'em to rest forever. Man is definitely not alone in the universe.

The hull metal is smooth and very dark, with lots of small towers and other protuberances whose functions we can't even begin to figure out. There's a hatch directly below us; Schuyler and I are going to go outside and see if we can get it open. The rest will stay aboard the ***Discovery*** for the moment, just as a safety precaution.

(0:56) The hatch is as easy to close as it was to open — the controls are absurdly simple, as if they were designed to be handled by ignorant savages like us.

(1:30) Sorry about the language right there. Schuyler and I were moving the atmosphere test unit out of the airlock, and discovered the hard way that this corridor has a gravity field. Nothing's broken, I don't think, but it was quite a shock...Townsend informs me that I should call this a "pseudo-gravity," since real gravity is impossible to produce artificially. I'm not sure what difference it makes, but I am willing to bow to his superior knowledge.

The ATU indicates oxygen content, temperature, and pressure are very earthlike, but we won't be taking off our suits for a while. Lots of possible contaminants we haven't checked for yet.



(2:21) Our first real room. I think we were all sort of hoping there'd be aliens waiting to greet us. But no one's here but us. Oh, well.

The cameras are picking all this up, of course, but Chris Payne says he's having trouble getting the TV transmissions back at ***Discovery,*** so I'll try and do a verbal description, too. The room's pretty bare, actually...

(2:22) The first object is a plain, black sphere with no markings; the second is a thick Mobius strip crisscrossed with grooves radiating from at least three radiants; the third is a sort of grossly misshapen artist's palette with unmarked buttons.

There are no obvious controls to the doors across the room, the ones leading further into the ship. Maybe one of these three artifacts does that. We'll see.

(4:47) Success! The room's lights have come on.

Townsend, Schuyler, and Rakowski may never live this down: a physical science generalist and two engineers having to get the necessary clue from a biological scientist — especially since they seem to consider Baxter's ET-bio speciality a kind of pseudoscience. In retrospect, I suppose it's not *that* odd — even Rakowski, with his computer systems background, isn't as used to thinking about things combining into a single unit as someone with ecological training has to. Still, it's probably a good thing that Baxter's not the type of woman who rubs men's noses in her victories.

But all that aside, the system works beautifully. We still have no idea how the Mobius strip generates and transmits its power — and I suspect Townsend would give his right arm to find out — or, for that matter, how the other two artifacts are tied into the combined system.

Rakowski's got the center door opening. Are there aliens...?

Nope, just another dark room. Flashlights out again...Looks exactly like the room we just left, except the three objects on the floor are entirely new shapes this time...

Schuyler?

Oh. Schuyler just wanted to see if we could backtrack. The door opened automatically, so we shouldn't have any problem when we decide to leave. Seems a bit early to be worrying about that.

Rakowski's already examining the artifacts. Now that we know generally how this works, progress should be quick.

(16:18) (*deep, sighing breath*) Well, it doesn't seem to be working. Again.

I think we're all willing to admit now that none of the four artifacts here is extraneous; that they *all* have to be used. *Why* there are four, instead of the three we've found in every room so far, we still don't know.

There's no way around it; we're going to have to take a sleep period before we go any further. I wanted to get this room figured out first, but it's just not going to happen. Everyone's getting tired and irritable, and we're so far behind my earlier projected schedule that we'll never catch up anyway.

Where the *hell* are these aliens hiding?

(31:26) Room seven ahead. Looks just like room six, with...I see five artifacts this time. Hell — just when we were getting used to four. I wonder if it's significant that the number's gone up at the same point that

we've finally lost radio contact with the ***Discovery***. That's not a pleasant thought.

I must not have slept very well; we've only been up seven hours and already I'm dead tired again. I don't think the others are any better off — tempers seem short all around. Next sleep period I'll insist everyone take a pill.

(38:45) Seven hours in a single room — a new record. Maybe Schuyler's right; maybe we *should* throw in the towel and go back.

(38:53) I think the dust has cleared now, but another argument like that one and I may scrub the mission on psychological grounds alone. The stress and tension are starting to get to everyone — me included. I sometimes get the feeling we're in a giant alien funhouse, or maybe a mad slasher movie. Though there's no proof at all that anything's watching us.... Anyway, it was quite an argument. Townsend is just as vehemently opposed to leaving as Schuyler is in favor of it; Rakowski and Baxter both want to go on but seem willing to do either. As for me...it's our job to gather as many answers as we can here, and so far we've mostly just come up with more questions. But if we can't get past this room in say, two more hours, I'll consider scrubbing.

Whatever happens, I think I'm glad I've got the only pistol.

(50:12) I didn't know that you could get nightmares with these pills. *Damn,* but that was scary.

(50:19) Everybody but Rakowski had bad dreams, too. Rakowski claims he slept like a baby. I wish to hell I knew how he did it.

I guess it's back to work. We're still in the ninth room — still haven't figured out how these things are supposed to work. I'm getting damn sick of them — everyone is. Except Rakowski, of course. If he doesn't put a cork in his enthusiasm, one of us is likely to murder him.

Is it possible to *feel* eyes on the back of your neck? Damned if I don't feel them on mine. The others feel them, too. Mass hallucination, or power of suggestion? Or are we all just cracking up?

(50:31) It's probably the most rational suggestion anyone's come up with in hours. All the psycho-test equipment's just sitting idle back there on the ***Discovery,*** and we only have to go three rooms back to get access to it...though I suspect Schuyler's hoping we'll keep going once we get that far. Well, we'll see. Schuyler's going to open the door back now.

(50:42) (*long, tight-sounding exhale*) For a minute there I thought we were going to have to try and blow the damn door open with my pistol's explosive shells. It was like one of my nightmares come true. But Schuyler finally got it, and we're heading back into room eight.

(54:20) The numbers can't really be disputed. We're a pretty frazzled group, but within what the program calls "acceptable range." I could still scrub the mission — as Schuyler keeps reminding me — but I think we can make it. I think Rakowski's the only one who's really happy with the decision; even Townsend's having second thoughts.

(57:01) I don't recall ever in my life being so tense that my hands actually trembled. I hope to hell the others can't see it.

I'm a fool. It never even occurred to me before that the psycho-test program evaluated us at sixth-room tension levels, which really weren't so bad. But the tension gets worse as we go inward — and, no, I *can't* prove that scientifically. But it's true. I was stupid not to take that into account, and now it's too late.

No, it's not.

Yes, it is. I can't scrub while Rakowski's still as excited as a kid at the zoo. I wish I could believe that he's just working hard enough to sublimate all his fear, but I know that's not true. He simply does *not* feel the tension that's squeezing the brains out of the rest of us. He can't feel the eyes that are practically drawing blood from my back. The damn guy can't even —

I'm rambling. I never used to ramble before.

Damn this ship. Damn Rakowski.

(60:22) Stupid, *stupid!* — and he may have killed *me,* too.

I don't know how much of that you could hear. Townsend walked into the tenth room and, like an idiot, tried to pull down a sweet-potato-shaped object that was hanging from the ceiling. The line turned out to have a few thousand volts on it.

We had to pop his helmet to give him a shot of D-Fibrillate — and *I* had to pop mine to respirate him. Probably both of us are loaded with atmospheric poisons now that the ATU couldn't detect. Damn stupid civilian.

That's it, I'm calling it quits. I'm ordering a sleep period — Townsend's out anyway, and the rest of us need it. When we wake up, we'll finish room ten and *look* into room eleven. If the aliens aren't there, we're leaving.

(67:50) I guess we'll skip finishing off room ten.

Schuyler's got my gun.

(68:26) Door back is finally open. Schuyler didn't crack completely while we were working on it, but it was a near thing. On our last backtrack each door was easier to get open than the one before it. I hope like hell the pattern holds all the way back.

(68:29) Rakowski's not coming back with us.

I guess I'm not really surprised — and I hate his damn guts. He has no *right* to enjoy being in this hell ship. Schuyler's taking aim. I could jump him, but I'd almost rather see him do it...No, he's lowering it again. I guess he figures it'll be a worse punishment to leave him alone here. I hope so.

Schuyler's given me the gun. We're heading back now. Those damn eyes are still following me. Maybe they'll finally latch onto Rakowski once we're gone. That'd serve him right.

We should be back on the ***Discovery*** within a couple of hours.

Compiler's note: No further log entries exist. The log itself was found floating in orbit almost four days later by Major Payne, just after the abrupt departure of the alien object from earth orbit. (See Section V for available data.) Dr. Rakowski was found wandering in a daze near the shuttle launch pad at Cape Canaveral at approximately that same time; medical and psychological studies are still proceeding. No trace of the four other expedition members have been found. (See Section IX for speculations.) ■■

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Facts for Fantasy

Edited by Susan Shwartz, Ph.D.

Snakes and the Egyptians

Like many other peoples, the Egyptians associated the gods above with light and goodness, and the gods below with night and evil. The first personifications of light and darkness, good and evil, among the Egyptians were Horus and Set, who subsequently fought. This combat is archetypal and may be seen in many later myths. The good always won, but in a peculiar way. The victory never saved the mortal body, but benefitted only the spirit. In just such a fashion, Osiris, the father of Horus and most beloved of Egyptian deities, was killed by his enemies, but subsequently reborn.

Because the Egyptians saw this combat as fatal to the mortal body, they went on to depict the mortal consequences. The natural enemy of the body was the worm. From the earliest time, it seems that the Egyptians chose a huge worm or serpent as the epitome of the powers which hated the dead and warred against the sun-god. In one pyramid, a long section of the funerary text that archeologists discovered contains nothing but formulae designed to protect the deceased against snakes and worms. These parts are among the oldest sections of *The Egyptian Book of the Dead,* which showed that the Egyptians regarded the serpent as the emblem of physical and moral evil. They even believed in a limbo filled with snakes. Yet for the Egyptians, as may be seen on sarcophagi and temples, the image of the winged serpent was one of the signs of enlightenment.

The Egyptian Book of the Dead, transliterated and translated by E.A. Wallis Budge, Dover Press, 1967

Count the Stars that Chart the Way

The seafaring people of Oceania, which straddles the earth's equator, developed a complex system of navigation. Take for example Arorae, a small Pacific atoll in the Gilbert Islands. On its northern shore can be found half a dozen pairs of parallel, roughcut slabs. Each is about the size of a man. They are arranged horizontally and cemented into the ground. One pair points to the neighboring island of Tamana, some 80 kilometers away, another to Banaba, 700 kilometers away, and a third to Beru Island, 140 kilometers away. The islanders call these stones either "Stone-canoes" or "Stones for Voyaging." They were used, they say, to set directions for navigation between islands, and served as well to instruct sailors in the art of navigation.

Each pair of stones is also aligned with the place where certain stars appear or disappear on the sea horizon at various times of night. At sunset in August, for example, Regulus aligns with the Tamana stone; at midnight, Arcturus gives the same bearing. The navigator who wishes to go from one island to another simply memorizes a "constellation" of a long chain of stars associated with his destination, and then points his canoe in that direction. The star positions become points of a compass developed through oral tradition and trial and error, and memorized by generations of successful seamen.

This system of stellar navigation is unique to Oceanian astronomers, who lacked both literacy and number skills. It was only possible to them because of the equatorial sky. A North Pacific or South Atlantic sailor who attempted to use the system of Arorae would be put off by relative motion. For example, if he sailed from New England to Great Britain, within an hour he would be thrown off-course 10°, or 20 kilometers for every 100 kilometers of his course.

"Tropical Archeoastronomy," by A.F. Aveni, *Science,* July 10, 1981

Bards

The early Welsh poetry and laws, plus the family trees, triads, and prose compositions remaining to us from the Welsh Middle Ages, explain the importance of people of learning to the British. For a long time, the courts of western Britain were the only place in the British Isles for a learned class. (Then the monastaries came, and there were two such places.) For the Welsh, the bards were key figures, and far more than mere entertainers such as the jongleurs of the later Middle Ages. Like the Irish *filid,* who had taken over the scholarly and teaching functions of the Druids, bards not only composed poems in praise of living rulers and mourning dead ones, the way a modern poet-laureate would do, they were also the keepers of the oral traditions of story, genealogy, the rules of poetry, and even of ordinary law. If one wanted to know who owned what property, or what the custom of the land was, one went to a bard. The bards were important not only for codifying the traditions into law, but for preserving them and transmitting them. Kings and courts could not do without them.

The Quest for Arthur's Britain, Geoffrey Ashe, London: Paladin, 1968

Science for Science Fiction

Edited by John Boardman, Ph.D.

The Competition

Our best present understanding of human evolution is that the humanoid line has several times branched into different species, and that only one of the competing species has then survived. This, of course, requires a definition of the term "species." The definition most commonly used is the one quoted by the Finnish paleontologist Bjorn Kurten in his book *Not From the Apes* (1970): "The lines of genetic communication are open *within* a species, but only rarely *between* species." If this view is held, then several animals which have been thought to be distinct species must be instead merely regional variations (races) of the same species. For example, all four recognized species of bighorn sheep will gladly breed with one another and with domestic sheep. The various "races" of humanity, including such apparently divergent forms as the Australoids and the Hottentots, show the same disposition to fertilize one another.

With this provision kept in mind, we see several distinct populations of humanoids occupying Africa at the same time during the Pleistocene and Recent periods (the past three million years). The short, lightly built, omnivorous *Australopithecus africanus,* and the heavier, vegetarian *Australopithecus robustus* were distinct from one another. The distinction remained when some isolated population of the former species, operating under some evolutionary pressure associated with the Pleistocene climate changes, developed into the first beings that could be assigned to the genus *Homo.*

By about a million years ago, *Homo habilis* ("handy man") or *Homo erectus* ("erect man") had wiped out the Australopithecines. *Homo erectus* then produced a few more offshoots, though the unmodified stock stayed around until as little as 30,000 years ago. (In the American Museum of Natural History you may see the skull of a *Homo erectus* of that period from Broken Hill, Zimbabwe, with one of the worst cases of dental caries you could imagine. He must have died from the septic condition of his mouth which was so bad that the mastoid bone had rotted through.) They co-existed for tens of thousands of years, but not on terms of amity. In fact, almost every human skull from the ice age seems to have the back broken open, indicating that the brain was considered a great delicacy and that the various humanoid species cheerfully preyed on one another.

The erect postures of humanoids caused the buttocks to become greatly developed, by contrast (to take an extreme case) with apes, which have virtually none. Since both sexes, in our own time and culture, take a particular note of the buttocks when first assessing an attractive member of the opposite sex, this may be an instinctive reflex from the time when a distant figure would be sized up as a potential sex partner by buttocks that indicated it to be a member of one's own species.

Once *Homo erectus* was out of the way, various separated breeding populations within *Homo sapiens* still seemed not to regard one another as fully human. Neanderthal Man, now downgraded to a sub-species, seems not to have interbred significantly with the rest of humanity. By about 35,000 years ago, the remains of the Neanderthalers were suddenly replaced, in Europe and Western Asia, by our type of human being. The replacement is too sudden to be anything but a violent clash between two groups, of which one utterly extirpated the other.

MUSE *(continued from page 2)*

from military games. One element contributing to the fall of Simulations was that so much time was spent on the issue games there was not enough time left over to create the boxed products which brought in the profit. We plan to increase the playtesting time for the issue games and thus decrease the glitches inherent in such complex game systems. We will also have more time to spend on creating the graphics for the maps and counters, and thus we will eliminate the time crunch that had become endemic for the staff of Simulations.

S&T™ magazine will also appear quarterly with games (in January, April, July and October) and will have two special editions as well. The special editions will be coming out in the spring and fall.

There will be several standards which we intend to use for all future games appearing in both magazines. One of the main functions of the magazines is introducing new gamers to the hobby. Many of the games that have appeared recently in the magazines have been of such high complexity, that a novice becomes lost in the sea of rules. We hope to maintain a balance within the issue games; three games per year will be of moderate complexity and one will be of moderately high to high complexity. We will aim for a sense of realism within each game, yet keep down the amount of detail to managable levels.

Another standard that will be implemented is that each issue game must have at least one scenario that can be played to completion in one night's sitting (two to three hours). While many games may also have longer scenarios or campaigns, they will also have at least one scenario for the gamer who cannot spend an entire weekend hunched over the map and counters.

Along the same lines, each game appearing in the magazines will be playable solitaire. This does not mean that the games will be one-player adventures only, but that no game will be included which contains elements that prohibit solitaire play. There will be no hidden set-ups, no dummy counters, or any other mechanics that would force a player to pretend he doesn't know what each side is up to.

Our most important standard will be that the games be enjoyable. Of course, this is also the trickiest standard to uphold, but it is what will make or break the magazine. With the military simulation games, there are often battles or campaigns that sound interesting in game proposals, but which upon creation often turn out to be one-sided romps or static snores. Certainly, there is an advantage in designing science fiction or fantasy games in that the "historical" background is generated while the game is being created. The drawback, however, is that the finished product can turn out to be just as deadly and boring as the wrong military simulation.

With the available expertise of David Ritchie, former head of R&D at Simulations Publications and now Product Manager of the SPI™ game line, we will be able to judiciously select topics for games appearing in the magazines and will opt for those subjects that sound the most exciting, the most balanced, and the most unusual. We expect our readership to let us know just how well we've succeeded in our goals.

The feedback card is the best instrument for telling us what the future issue games *and* the future editorial direction of the magazines should be. If you want something we haven't thought of, let us know.

Looking Ahead

This issue of *Ares* magazine has 56 pages, but the next issue will have 64. The magazine portion was three-quarters finished by the beginning of April, when TSR acquired the assets of Simulations. Thus, it retains its former identity, combining both fantasy and science fiction. The magazine will evolve into a science fiction magazine over the next several issues as the backlog of fantasy materials that were purchased or solicited are used up. The basic format of the magazine will remain the same, including 12-16 pages of rules in the quarterly issues, one or two pieces of fiction, science fact articles, support materials for the issue games, and reviews. Depending on the amount of space available per issue, we plan to include SF role-playing materials as well. The non-game issues will contain special articles with optional rules, new scenarios, extra counters, players' aids, etc. for SF boardgames, plus SF role-playing adventures and even an unexpected game or two (though probably without maps and counters). One idea we're kicking around is using the rules and components for the *Damocles Mission*™ game and adding a whole new set of information messages, which will have a new reason for the artifact coming to earth and new perils for the exploration team.

In terms of future issue games, David Ritchie is polishing up his *Omega War*™ game to appear in *Ares* issue nr. 14. It concerns a 25th century post-holocaust America which has come under the dictatorial rule of the corrupt World Union. Heroic nomads astride their giant mutant razorbacks take on the hover-tanks defending the city-domes of the World Union. Though a strategic-level game, Dave has given it a nice tactical feeling. Down the road is the *Nightmare Hotel*™ game by David Spangler and Gerry Klug, a game of ghostbusting in a haunted house; the *Olympus Mons*™ game by Gary Gillette and David Rohde, an operational-level game of warfare on Mars; and a game based on Poul Anderson's novel, *The High Crusade*. In the next issue, we'll have progress reports on some of the games to appear.

Several of the SF/F games that Simulations had been working on will not appear. The Conan game that was being designed was found to be not up to TSR's standards; it simply did not have enough replay value. Though quite faithful to Howard's universe, one or two playthroughs would have clued players into the obvious way to play the game. Also, the *Star Trek* game will not appear since TSR was unable to come to satisfactory terms on a new contract with Paramount Pictures.

After a long delay, the *Arcane Wisdom* and *First Contacts* supplements will appear. We also intend to continue supporting the *Universe*™ game in *Ares* Magazine, with adventures and gaming suggestions by knowledgable gamers. (Yes, that is a hint that we would like people to send in adventures and materials for the "CommLink" column. Before we can look at any adventure or supplementary materials for any SF role-playing game, we must have a signed release form accompanying the material. (Please contact Mike Price, Games Division, TSR Hobbies, PO Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147 for an information packet on how to submit materials to us.) Materials that would be suitable for the "CommLink" column can be sent to Editor-in-Chief Michael Moore, Dragon Publishing, PO Box 110, Lake Geneva 53147.

The *DragonQuest*™ role-playing game will in the future be supported in *Dragon*™ Magazine. Contact Mike Price on how to submit adventures and supplementary materials to *Dragon* (materials that would be suitable for the "Questing" column can be submitted directly to Editor-in-Chief Kim Mohan at Dragon Publishing at the same address as above).

We are interested in materials for *all* SF role-playing games to use in *Ares* Magazine, so if you happen to play the *Star Frontiers*™, *Gamma World*™, or *Traveller*™ games, please follow the methods outlined above for submitting materials to *Ares* Magazine. In a similar manner, we are also looking for articles on SF boardgames to use in the magazine; if you have ideas for game variants for SF games by all publishers, please send them on to us. (TSR Hobbies does pay for materials used in the magazines; the editors will contact you about payment rates if the materials are accepted.)

We rely heavily on our readers for determining the future editorial direction of *Ares* Magazine. We would like to know your response to some of the ideas we have for future columns and regular features that would appear in the magazine. Among the suggestions kicking around are: 1) a letters to the editor column; 2) a designer's forum in which game authors would be able to explain how they approached the design of their games and why they chose the elements they used; 3) design prospectus articles that suggest unusual SF game approaches and what kinds of game systems that might be most suitable; 4) a subscriber personal column to help gamers find potential opponents in their vicinities; 5) an annual year-end review of SF/F boardgames (or role-playing materials); and 6) an addenda column with solutions to questions that arise during the play of games. We also want to know any suggestions for other features that might regularly appear in the magazine. Is there some aspect of the SF genre or of SF gaming that we have overlooked? Should we also include materials on fantasy gaming in the magazine? How can we make *Ares* a better magazine? The responses we receive from our readers will help us improve the magazine (and will also give the editor something to discuss in upcoming editorials).

The future prospects of *Ares* Magazine are enormous. While carrying on its former tradition, we hope to keep fine-tuning it to the extent that *Ares* becomes the best science fiction magazine on the market.

Michael Moore

SCIENCE FACT

The Space Shuttle: Reaching Beyond

by Walter B. Hendrickson, Jr.

As presently designed, the Space Shuttle can reach only a low-earth orbit, up to a 240km altitude. This is inconvenient, not only for players of the *Damocles Mission*™ game, but for NASA as well. They must send communications and weather satellites into geosynchronous orbit 36,000 kilometers above the equator, where they will match earth's rotation. Also, there are space probes to be sent off to distant planets. For these missions, the Shuttle will carry an unmanned upper stage in its cargo bay, in addition to the satellite or space probe.

It would be possible, with a few modifications in the Shuttle and its flight plan, to extend the craft's range greatly. The first step in this upgrading of the Shuttle was suggested by Dr. Gerald K. O'Neill of Princeton University in the March 1978 issue of *Astronautics and Aeronautics:* "As designed, the Shuttle Orbiter carries no fuel for its main engines. It must bring its external tank (35 metric tons empty weight), almost to orbital energy. But either by the sacrifice of a few percent in payload to additional OMS (Orbital Maneuvering System) propellant, or by storing hydrogen slush rather than liquid hydrogen, the external tankage could be brought into orbit...."

O'Neill proposes grinding up the external tank to serve as reaction mass for a mass driver (an electromagnetic catapult) powered spacecraft. However, if the external tank were left attached to the Space Shuttle, it could be refueled in orbit. This could be done by using a modification of the boom system of mid-air fueling techniques developed by the US Air Force.

Fueling Up

In this system, the boom operator on the tanker aircraft extends a long, telescoping boom. Small elevons, forming a "V" at the end of the boom, allow the boom operator to guide the boom as the receiver aircraft moves up, and couples to boom. During this operation, the pilot of the receiver craft is guided by instructions from the boom operator. Once connected to the boom, the receiver aircraft can be refueled at the rate of up to 2,721.55kg per minute.

For use in space, the only modifications needed in this system for orbital refueling would be the addition of small thrusters at the ends of the elevons on the boom to allow maneuvering in airless space. These thrusters should be powered by cold, inert compressed gas to avoid any reaction with any spilled fuel.

Another way to refuel a spacecraft in orbit would be to dock the vehicles together, and connect lines through the joined docking ports.

Since the docking port of a Space Shuttle is equipment not carried on all flights, it is mounted in the cargo bay just behind the crew's cabin. This means that there would be no danger of any spilled fuel leaking into the cabin. Also, the propellants used in the Space Shuttle's external tank are liquid oxygen and liquid hydrogen which are non-toxic and non-corrosive. They are, however, extremely cold; liquid oxygen boils at −183° C, and liquid hydrogen boils at −252.87° C. This is cold enough to freeze anything it touches. Fortunately, conventional space suits could insulate the fueling crews against these cryogenically cold propellants.

Like any rocket propellants, liquid oxygen and liquid hydrogen are an explosive combination. In fact, even when combined with just ordinary earthly air, hydrogen is explosive, as witness the giant airship *Hindenburg*'s disaster. Thus, to be on the safe side, it would be wise to drain off any spilt propellants into space before the fueling crew reenters the cabin of either the refueling vehicle or the Space Shuttle.

The tanker spacecraft is a problem, however, because the Space Shuttle's external tank can hold 707,100kg of liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen propellants. This is nearly six times the payload that a Saturn V could carry into low-earth orbit. Obviously, a space station would be needed to store enough propellant to completely refill a Space Shuttle's external tank in orbit.

Fortunately, the Space Shuttle does not need a full tank of propellants to reach geosynchronous orbit or escape velocity from low-earth orbit. It is already going about 29,000 kilometers per hour, so it needs only 11,000 more kilometers to reach earth's approximately 40 kilometers per hour escape velocity. Virtually the same amount of velocity change would be needed to get into geosynchronous orbit because the spaceship must first climb out to 36,000km, then *match* the 1,609km per hour, due east equatorial motion of geosynchronous orbit. For this it would need only around 100,000kg of propellants. However, the Space Shuttle is designed to re-enter the earth's atmosphere at no more than 29,000 kilometers per hour, which means that it must get back into low-earth orbit before landing, thus requiring another 100,000kg of fuel. To get the Shuttle, with this added propellant, off to either geosynchronous orbit or deep space, about 300,000kg more propellant will be needed. This makes a total of 400,000kg of propellant that would have to be supplied to the Space Shuttle in low-earth orbit for it to get to geosynchronous orbit or beyond.

In other words, we still need an orbiting filling station for the Space Shuttle. At least now we trimmed it down to four Saturn V-size payloads which could easily be docked together in orbit either automatically or manually. Rather than a Saturn V, which is out of production, the launch vehicle used would probably be an HLLV (Heavy Lift Launch Vehicle) of the type designed at the 1975 study of space colonies directed by NASA's Ames Research Center and Stanford University and under the sponsorship of NASA and the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE). This HLLV is derived from Space Shuttle technology and, in fact, uses parts of the Space Shuttle system.

The core of the vehicle would be a modified Shuttle external tank with four Space Shuttle main engines attached to its aft end. For added lift, four Space Shuttle solid rocket boosters would be strapped to the sides of this core. Atop this is mounted a 120,000kg payload. Four of these payloads would be sufficient to provide the regular propellants to reach escape velocity, and later return to low-earth orbit. The extra 41,030.78kg of payload could be used for the space station refueling crew and equipment plus a little extra fuel for midcourse corrections.

It would take about four years to get the Heavy Lift Launch Vehicle manufactured and launched. About the same amount of time would be required for a revived Saturn V. This time span is necessary because the launch facilities at the Kennedy Space Center, including the mobile launch platform that transports the spacecraft from the assembly building to the pad, have been modified to handle the Space Shuttle. They would, therefore, have to be remodified for any new launch vehicles since the service towers left over from the moon program were cut down to the height of a Space Shuttle.

Speeding Up the Launch

If there were less than four years lead time to reach the *Damocles* objective before someone else got there first, then the propellant for refueling the modified Space Shuttle would have to be carried up by other Shuttles. An unmodified Space Shuttle has a payload limit of 29,000kg to an equatorial orbit, which means that fourteen launchings would be needed to build up the 400,000kg needed for refueling or, more precisely, repropelling the Space Shuttle. NASA plans to have about one Space Shuttle flight per week once the craft becomes operational, using a fleet of four. So the orbiting filling station would be receiving its first customer in about fifteen weeks — barring any delays caused by mishaps such as fuel spills.

There are, however, ways to shorten this assembly line. NASA plans to nearly double the Space Shuttle's lifting ability by mounting a Titan liquid booster module under the Shuttle's external tank. This added booster will come in handy even in normal operations of the Space Shuttle from Vandenberg Air Force Base, California. Lacking the added momentum of earth's rotation, the Space Shuttle — without the booster — can put only 11,000kg into low polar orbit, but

with the Titan liquid booster module attached, it could put about 19,000kg into polar orbit.

Basically, this booster module is a pair of Titan II first stage engines drawing their propellants from four 3-meter-long tanks. Together with its bracing, this assembly is 10.5 meters long, extending 7.4 meters below the lower dome of the external tank. The lower edge of the Titan liquid fueled booster module comes about even with the nozzles on the Shuttle's solid rocket boosters. The Titan liquid booster module weighs 14,515kg empty, and 174,633kg when filled with propellants. These propellants are 54,885kg of blended hydrazine and unsymmetric dimethylhydrazine fuel and 103,873kg of nitrogen tetroxide oxidizer. These are the same storable, but highly corrosive, chemicals that are used as propellants in the Space Shuttle's Orbital Maneuvering system.

On launch, the Titan liquid booster module's engines would ignite five seconds after launch at an altitude of about 61 meters, adding its 239,950kg of thrust to the 2,481,150.2kg thrust of the Space Shuttle's main engines and boosters. After about 200 seconds, the Titan II engines stop firing, and the liquid booster is dropped off.

If this launch were made from the Kennedy Space Center instead of Vandenberg AFB, the thrust augmented Shuttle could carry 50,368kg into low-earth orbit. Thus, the filling station needed for refueling the Shuttle could be established in just eight flights. The refuelable Shuttle would get off on the ninth flight, cutting the whole time down to a minimum of nine weeks from first launch to last.

The Wingless Way

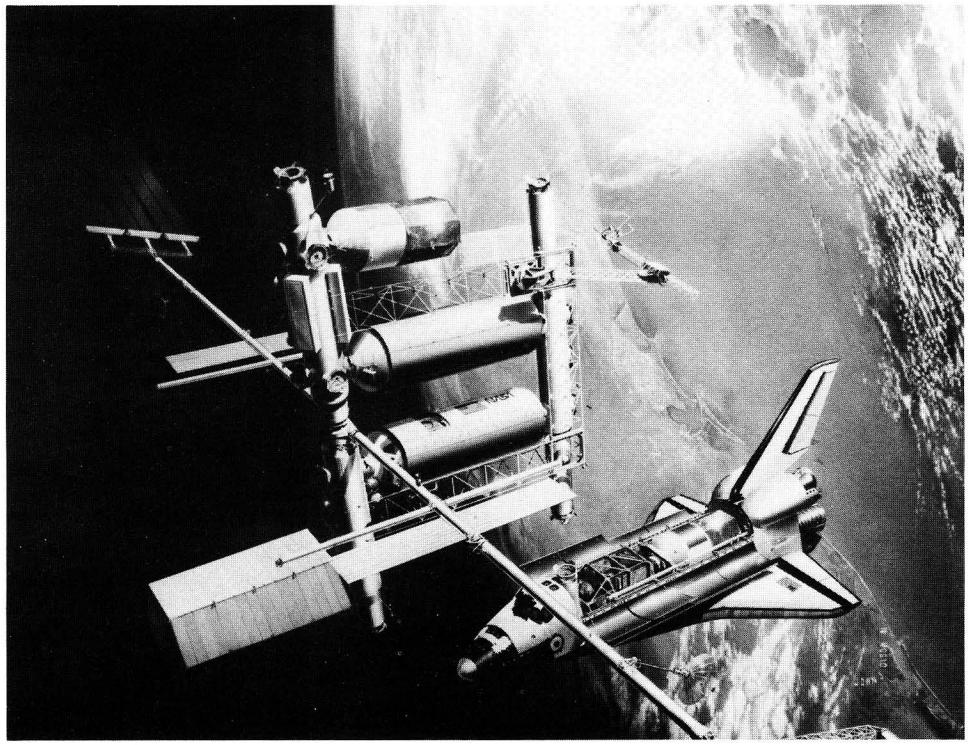
There is a way of cutting the time down even further without resorting to new and larger vehicles which would require modified launch facilities. This method requires the use of a stripped down, unmanned, wingless, one-way version of the Space Shuttle. With just the solid rocket boosters and the three Space Shuttle main engines as power, this vehicle could carry 65,000kg into low-earth orbit. This booster could put the orbital filling station together in six flights, with a manned Shuttle bringing up the refueling crew and equipment on the seventh flight. Then the refuelable Shuttle would go up on the eighth flight.

Stick a Titan liquid booster module under the unmanned shuttle and it could put 112,450kg into low-earth orbit. This approach could put up the 400,000kg of fuel we want with a little payload to spare in just four flights. The extra payload could either be used for more propellant with the refueling crew and equipment coming up on a conventional Space Shuttle, or for remote-controlled refueling equipment.

Since the unmanned Shuttle is the same size and configuration as the present manned Space Shuttle, it would need little modification in the launch facilities. All that would be needed is modification of equipment or procedures at the launch control and flight control centers, to deal with an unmanned vehicle instead of a manned one. Since the conventional Space Shuttle cannot be flown unmanned, this means that the unmanned Shuttle will require either remote controls or an autopilot.

However the propellants are delivered to low-earth orbit, once the Space Shuttle is refueled with its 400,000kg or propellants, it could travel anywhere in space within thirty days' flying time, at 40,000 kilometers per hour. It could even go into moon orbit carrying an Apollo Lunar Module-type craft for landing on the lunar surface.

Artist's rendering of Space Shuttle visiting a Space Operations Center in earth orbit (National Aeronautics and Space Administration)



The 30-day range limit is not due to the Shuttle's speed, but to the limits of its life support system. If it were equipped with a completely closed life support system that recycled all food, air, and water, the orbitally-refueled Space Shuttle would have virtually unlimited range. With a full tank of propellants, the Shuttle could even go into orbit around Mars or Venus. However, the landing craft needed for sending men down to the surface of Mars would be too large for the Shuttle. Nor could the Shuttle land on Mars, even if a suitable base were provided for it, because its wings are not suited to the thin Martian air.

As a matter of fact, the Space Shuttle's wings are just useless dead weight when it is in airless space. This is shown by the fact that an unmanned, wingless, expendable Shuttle could carry 65,000kg into orbit even without a Titan liquid fueled booster, while the conventional winged, reusable Space Shuttle can carry only 29,000kg into low-earth orbit. The conventional Space Shuttle does, however, have several advantages, not the least of which is that it is reusable and thus greatly reduces its operating costs. In addition, the Space Shuttle can return up to 14,500kg to earth. This makes possible such experiments as the European Space Association's Spacelab, a manned laboratory designed to be carried into space and back in the cargo bay of the Space Shuttle.

Setbacks for NASA

It was because being reusable made it less expensive to operate that the Space Shuttle was developed in the first place. Even before NASA suffered its severe and traumatic budget cuts after the first manned moon landing, the agency found that expandable boosters and single-use spacecraft were just too expensive to supply a permanent space station. What was needed were reusable spacecraft. Originally, the Space Shuttle was to be just the first of a whole fleet of reusable spacecraft.

According to a 1969 plan made by NASA, a completely reusable Space Shuttle, with both orbiter and booster being winged and reusable, was anticipated. This Shuttle would act as a ferry, carrying men and supplies to a huge Space Base staffed by one hundred people — in low-earth orbit — by the end of the 1970's. Other smaller, *Skylab*-sized space stations would be in higher-earth orbits, and orbiting the moon. A permanent base would be established on the moon, and by now preparations would be underway for a manned Mars flight.

An unstreamlined 31,751kg spacecraft, called a Space Tug, would carry six people and 5,896.7kg of payload from low-earth orbit to higher-earth orbit, or between lunar orbit and the moon's surface. It would also be used for unmanned satellites and space probes weighing up to 18,143kg. The tug could even be equipped with remote manipulators, like the one used in the Space Shuttle cargo bay, for work around space stations.

For flights between the earth orbit and the moon orbit, nuclear rockets would be used, starting in the late 1970's. The prototype of the engine for this spacecraft was the NERVA, for Nuclear Engine for Rocket Vehicle Application, which had just completed its

ground tests at Jackass Flats, Nevada, by the time NASA developed its grandiose space plans. The author based the earth-moon transportation system in his novel, *Class G-Zero*, on this plan.

The manned Mars expedition would combine all of the reusable spacecraft in NASA's 1969 plan, except the Space Tug and Space Shuttle. A 6-man Space Station living quarters on each ship, and six nuclear Shuttles would boost them off towards Mars. Four of these would separate and return to earth orbit, while the remaining two, one on each ship, would carry the expedition for the rest of the mission. Each ship would have the capability of carrying the entire twelve person expedition if something should happen to the other. How such an expedition might turn out, with international backing, was dramatized in *The Far Call*, by Gordon R. Dickson.

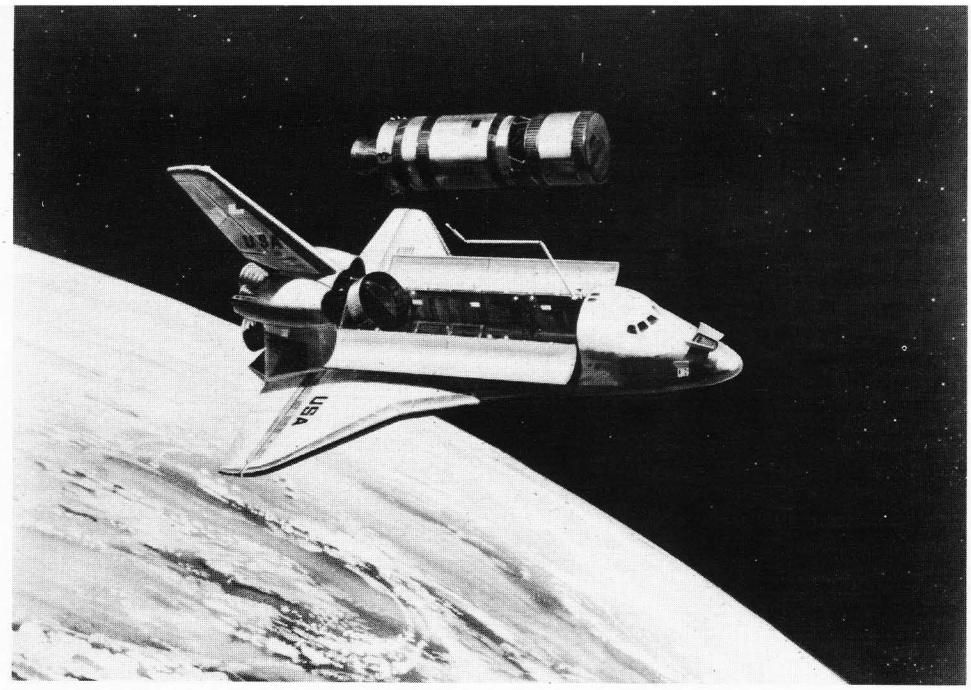
Of course, the Mars expedition went much more smoothly in NASA's 1969 plan than it did in Dickson's novel. In the NASA plan, the first expedition would explore the Martian atmosphere with unmanned probes, then send down a landing craft that was sort of a cross between a Viking probe and an Apollo Lunar Module. Again, like the Apollo moon flights, more Mars flights would follow at the rate of one every time Mars and Earth were properly lined up, or every 25 to 26 months. This would lead to a semi-permanent base by the mid 1980's, and a permanent base with a manned, Mars-orbiting satellite by 1990.

So, if NASA had been able to carry out its 1969 plans, there would be no problem about how players of the *Damocles Mission* game would reach their goal. They could hop on space tugs and go. Unfortunately, after the Apollo program and the Vietnam War, Congress and the American public were in no mood for any more grandiose space ventures. As a result, NASA's budget cuts were so deep that the agency was lucky to salvage the orbiter portion of the Space Shuttle. The rest of NASA's manned space exploration dreams had to be shelved and forgotten about for a time.

Adapting for Survival

The product of this rude awakening is a winged Space Shuttle orbiter which clings bat-like to its huge external tank, flanked by two solid rocket boosters. During launch, the orbiter's engines draw their fuel from the huge external tank while the solid rocket boosters add ther push. The solid rocket boosters drop off on the way into space and parachute into the ocean where they can be recovered and reused. The orbiter also returns to land on a jet runway, usually at Edwards Air Force Base, or the Kennedy Space Center. The external tank, however, burns up during reentry over the ocean.

Once this makeshift Space Shuttle has passed its test flights, which are currently under way, NASA and the Air Force plan to use it for all their space missions. For this purpose, they plan a fleet of four Shuttles. For satellites and space probes going beyond the 240km ceiling of the Space Shuttle, the Air Force has devised an Inertial Upper Stage (IUS) from existing unmanned rockets. NASA also plans to use some existing upper stages, such as the Agena and Centaur, with the Space Shuttle in addition to the IUS.



Depiction of Space Shuttle launching the Space Tug (US Air Force photo)

Apollo-IUS

There was one Apollo Command and Service Module combination left over from the Apollo program. If this could be refurbished for flight, it would provide *Damocles Mission* players a way of reaching their goal without the need of a refueling station on low-earth orbit. Fully loaded for flight, the Apollo Command and Service Module combination weighs 10,296.6kg, including the weight of the three man crew. With a 14,494.5kg IUS booster attached, you would have a hybrid spacecraft weighing a total of 24,791kg – well within the weight limit of a conventional Space Shuttle.

This Shuttle would deposit the Apollo-IUS combination in low-earth orbit. Then, the IUS would boost the Apollo spacecraft up to geosynchronous orbit. After the Apollo spacecraft had finished its rendezvous with the *Damocles* objective, or whatever mission it had, it could use its Service Module engine to deorbit for return to earth.

This mission could be accomplished in one flight, reducing the delays due to mishaps. Only the time needed to ready the vehicle for the launch and to train the crew would have to be considered. There is, however, one hitch in the latter factor. The controls of the Apollo are not like those of the Space Shuttle. Fortunately, NASA's Space Shuttle Orbital Flight Test team has four astronauts who have flown in Apollo spacecraft: John W. Young, Fred W. Haisie, Jr., Jack R. Lousma, and Vance D. Brand. Two other astronauts, Robert L. Crippen and Richard H. Truly, have served on the support teams for Skylab and Apollo-Soyuz missions.

We now have a prime crew for the Apollo who have flown it before, plus a backup crew of one who has flown it and two who are at least familiar with the craft. For the Space Shuttle prime crew, we still have two of NASA's Orbital Flight Test Team left, Joe H. Engle and C. Gordon Fullerton. For the Shuttle's backup crew, and for astronaut support crew of the entire project, NASA would have to draw on its reserve corps of astronauts.

It is therefore possible that the proposed hybrid Space Shuttle-IUS-Apollo combination would be ready to go with a trained crew of astronauts, in about six months. This is pretty much the same time it would take for the orbital refueling scenarios we have discussed. Besides, in those cases there would be the additional time, and complications, required for setting up the orbiting filling station. Among these complications would be the time required to train astronauts in the mid-air refueling techniques used by an Air Force tanker crew, or to train an Air Force tanker crew as astronauts. In either case, the time required would be quite a bit more than six months.

New Visions

Ironically, at the same time that NASA was trying, unsuccessfully, to sell its 1969 plans for space exploration to Congress, another even more imaginative dream was being proposed by Dr. O'Neill. This was his concept of huge space colonies with dimensions measured in kilometers, which would be built in the LaGrange point, L-5, equally distant from the earth and moon, out of material catapulted off the moon.

The moon was selected because it is easier to get off the airless, low gravity moon than earth. This is illustrated by the fact that it took a Titan II ICBM with a first stage producing 195,000kg thrust, and a second stage with 45,000kg thrust to put two men in earth orbit. The Lunar Module, however, needed only a single 1,600kg thrust engine to put two men into orbit from the lunar surface.

Independently of O'Neill, Dr. Peter E. Glaser, Vice-President of Arthur D. Little, Inc., proposed a concept of Space Solar Power Satellites (SSPS). These would be huge solar-energy collectors rivaling the space colonies in size. Circling the earth in synchronous orbit, they would convert solar energy to electricity, beaming it back to earth with microwaves.

The idea of Space Solar Power Satellites was quickly picked up by Dr. O'Neill as a

way that his space colonies could pay for themselves. In fact, it looks as if it might be more economical, and less damaging to earth's environment, to build the solar power satellites from lunar material sent to the L-5 colony, rather than from parts sent up from earth. It would take a multitude of launchings from earth to put up the 45 Space Solar Power Satellites that would complete the network. This is the reason that the 1975 NASA-ASEE Conference on space colonies developed the Heavy Launch Vehicle which we mentioned earlier.

The idea of space colonies and Space Solar Power Satellites soon began to gather a fair amount of popular support, both in the aerospace community and with the general public. Since space is NASA's middle name, the agency was quick to join in the study of space colonies and Space Solar Power Satellites. The principal contribution of NASA was its participation in the 1975 conference at Ames, which considered all aspects of the subject of space colonies and Space Solar Power Satellites.

This study, naturally, included the wide variety of spacecraft needed to move people and equipment between earth, moon and space colonies. The Space Shuttle, with a passenger module fitted in its cargo bay — in the manner of the European Space Agency's Spacelab — would carry the people to low-earth orbit. Most cargo would be brought up to low-earth orbit by Heavy Lift Launch Vehicles similar to the one mentioned earlier.

To the Moon and Mars

For transportation from low-earth orbit to the moon and space colonies, the scientists at the 1975 NASA-ASEE conference considered the NERVA. However, in *Space Settlements, a Design Study,* by Richard D. Johnson, of NASA's Ames Research Center, and Charles Holbrow, of Colegate University, they report: "The NERVA nuclear rocket is rejected in favor of the Space Shuttle Main Engine (SSME). NERVA offers some high performance, but represents a new development, and involves the safety considerations associated with nuclear systems. The SSME represents an available, well understood engine. Moreover, with oxygen for refueling available at L-5 from processing of lunar ores in industrial operations, the SSME vehicle performance would approach that of NERVA." Eventually, refueling for both the SSME vehicles, and the nuclear rockets could be made available from the moon.

This SSME powered craft is, in effect, an updated version of the Space Tug proposed in NASA's 1969 plan. It would be made up of several modules for fuel, cargo, and/or passengers, so it is called an SSME Modular Tug. Such a spacecraft could carry 200 people, or 900 tons to the moon or L-5. Obviously, this makes it a good candidate for the manned Mars flights NASA dreamed of in 1969.

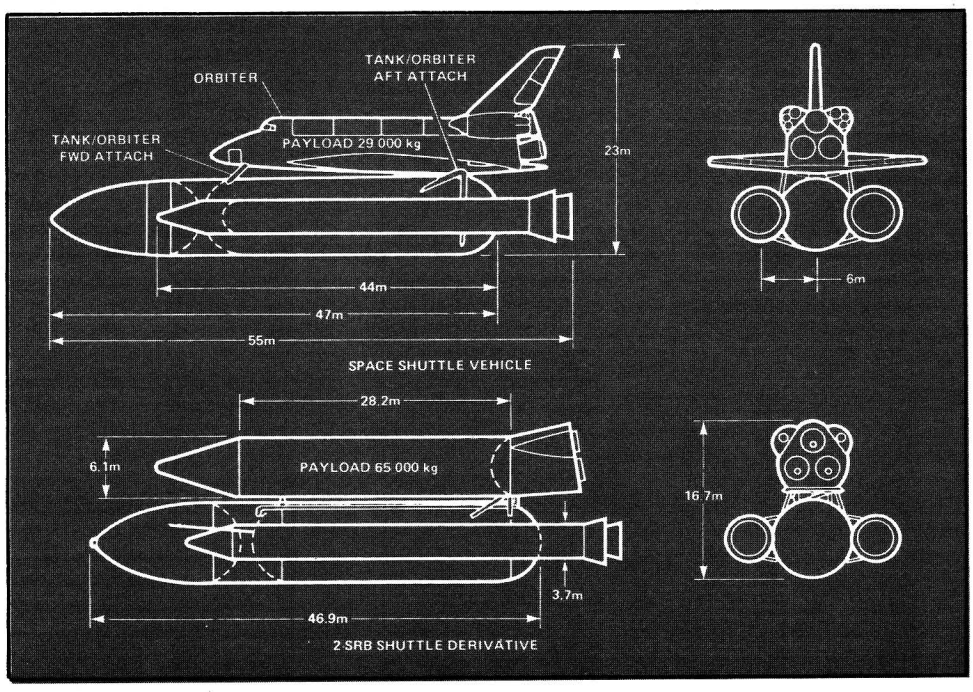
Indeed, in "Mars in 1995?" (*Analog,* June 1981), Bob Parkinson suggests using the SSME Modular Tug, which he calls an Orbital Transfer Vehicle (OTV), as part of the assembly of manned spacecraft for a Mars expedition. An upper stage from a Heavy Lift Launch Vehicle would provide the push to get each ship off to Mars, and the Orbital Transfer Vehicles would provide the power for maneuvering into Mars orbit, and returning to earth. Spacelabs, upgraded from Space Shuttle payloads to free-flying space stations, would serve as living quarters for two of the three ships. A third ship would carry a Mars Excursion Module (MEM), like the one proposed in NASA's 1969 plan.

All of these studies show that the technology developed for the Space Shuttle, and the Shuttle itself, can be extended to take us back to the moon and beyond to L-5 and Mars. It is more practical, however, to send an unstreamlined, or deep-space ship, built from Space Shuttle technology on missions beyond low-earth orbit because propellants are not wasted pushing along the wings and heat shielding which are unnecessary in outer space. Besides, if a spacecraft is designed for use solely outside the atmosphere, solar cells, antennas, and sensors can be placed anywhere they will be able to do their job most efficiently.

Developing a new spacecraft takes several years from the first plans to the final, operational product, even if nothing goes wrong. The Space Shuttle, in its present form, for example, was expected to take eight years from the beginning of development to its first operational flight. (Actually, the Shuttle is now two years behind because NASA's tight budget resulted in some technical problems that delayed development.)

Thus, if there is a hurry to send men somewhere beyond low-earth orbit, such as to rendezvous with a visiting alien artifact, it is better to go with modifications of existing spacecraft. There are currently two possibilities: One is a revived Apollo Command and Service Module with a Shuttle to carry it to low-earth orbit, and an IUS to carry it on to geosynchronous orbit; the other is a Shuttle that carries its external tank all the way into low-earth orbit. Here, such a Shuttle can be refueled from a store of propellants sent up by unmanned Shuttles given an extra boost from Titan liquid fueled boosters. ■■

Schematic drawing of Space Shuttle (top) and Shuttle derivative (bottom) used for transporting people and goods into low-earth orbit (National Aeronautics and Space Administration)



Feedback Results:
***Ares*™ Magazine nr. 10**

Rank	*Item*	*Rating*
1	Return of the Stainless Steel Rat™ Game	7.38
2	Return of the Stainless Steel Rat (story)	6.61
3	Designer's Notes	6.51
4	Games	6.48
5	DeltaVee Enhanced	6.38
6	Camp of Alla-Akabar	6.04
7	Science for Science Fiction	5.97
8	Books	5.81
9	Film & Television	5.80
10	There's Only One Universe	6.64
11	Facts for Fantasy	5.61
12	DragonNotes	5.56
13	Media	5.47
	Overall	6.74

***Ares*™ Magazine nr. 11**

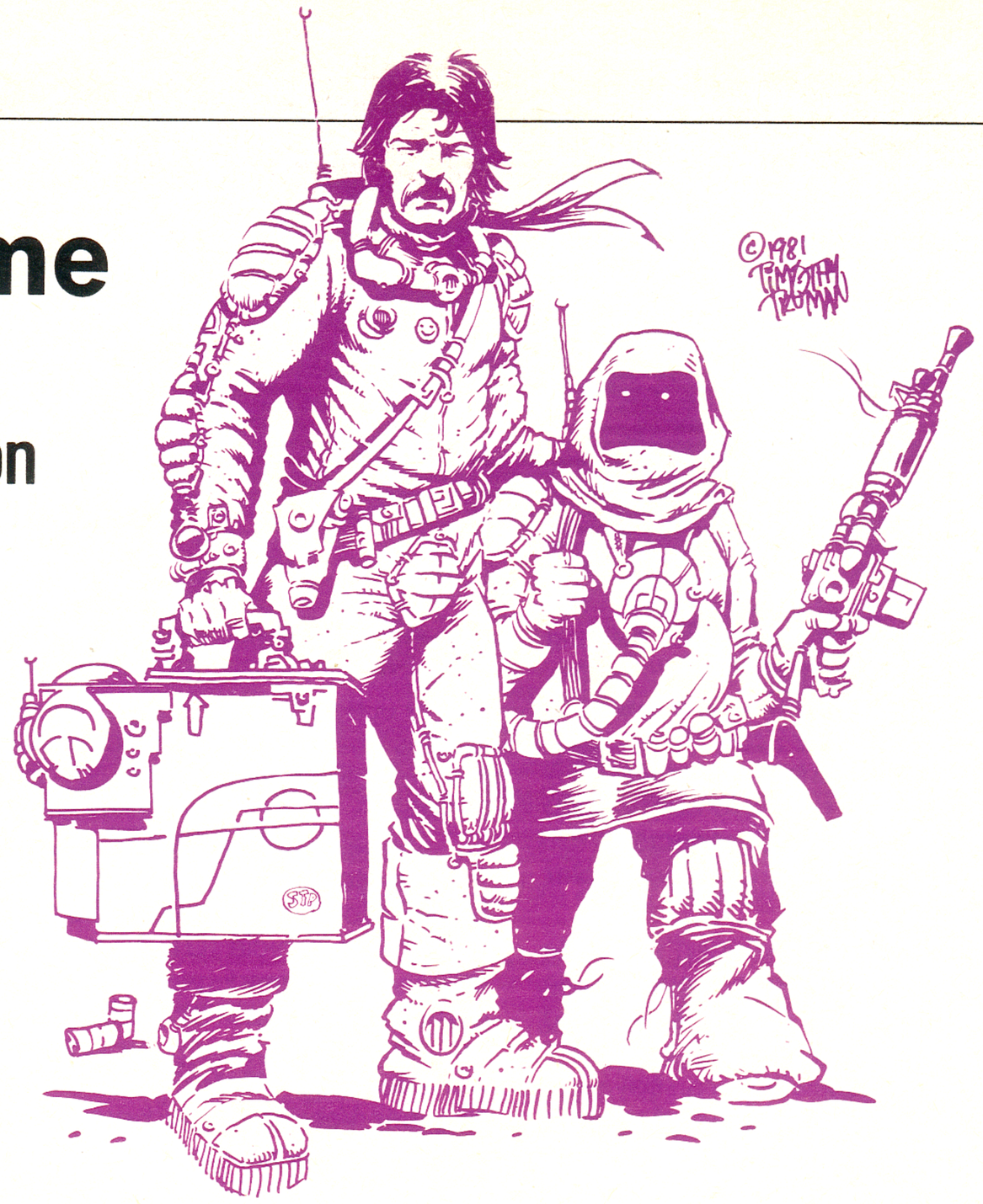
Rank	*Item*	*Rating*
1	Albion: Land of Faerie™ Game	6.80
2	Designer's Notes	6.58
3	You Against the System	6.49
4	Games	6.38
5	Chichevache	6.19
6	A History of the Third Fomorian War	5.99
7	Science for Science Fiction	5.89
8	Power Points of Albion	5.87
9	Books	5.83
10	Facts for Fantasy	5.78
11	Film & Television	5.44
12	DragonNotes	5.27
13	Media	5.07
	Overall	6.38

VARIANT

StarTrader™ Game Enhanced

Piracy, Subversion, Corruption and Insurance

by David Spangler



My first encounter with the *StarTrader* game took place on a trip to New York when, while visiting Simulations Publications, I was asked to take part in a playtest. Economic games are usually not my forte, but when the session was over, I had been captivated. The memory of that game stayed with me in a most enjoyable way (perhaps because I was winning when we stopped). Consequently, when later asked to be a blindtester for it, I was only too happy to accept.

StarTrader is a game of free trade and competition in a cosmic environment. Personally, I feel it has the makings of a classic. It possesses options for a multitude of strategies, which only become apparent when one is familiar with the game system. It can also be a long game, but the intricacies of play can be so involving and exciting in themselves that we often found it did not matter whether we actually completed a scenario or not.

For those who do not mind the length of the game as it is and who wish even more intricacy of play, here are some rules ideas that never made it into the final version. They will add to the complexity of the game but can enhance the strategic possibilities of what is already an excellent addition and introduction to the *Universe*™ game system.

Boarding and Capturing Ships

Combat in space, particularly with missiles, can be deadly and, worse, wasteful of profitable resources. It seemed useful, therefore, to have some provision by which a player could capture an opponent's ship and cargo. In fieldtesting, we found that McRadie's piratical crew especially could benefit by seizing a whole spaceship rather than chasing pieces of cargo about the cosmos.

When a ship has a protection rating of 3 or less and no undamaged pods, an aggressor may declare "Capture Combat." The attacker must then roll a number of hits on the CRT exactly equal to the victim's protection rating. To increase his chance of doing this, the attacker may voluntarily lower his combat strength. Missile combat may not be used. If he is successful in rolling hits equal to the defender's protection rating, then the ship has been boarded and captured; it and its cargo now belong to the attacker.

If the attacker is unsuccessful, and the number of hits is higher or lower than the defender's protection rating, then the defender takes those hits normally. The attacker also takes hits, however, equal to the difference between the hits scored and the defender's protection rating. Thus, if an attacker attempts to capture a ship with a Protection Rating of 3 and rolls 1 hit, the defender suffers 1 hit but the attacker suffers 2 hits.

A captured ship cannot be landed at a spaceport with a law level of 3 or higher until and unless the new owner fulfills two conditions: one complete turn must pass and he must have criminal connections of 5 or higher or political connections of at least 6 (necessary to "doctor" registration papers, files, and so forth).

Insurance

Because of the hazards of space, ships and their cargos may be lost; such disasters can also occur due to the nefarious actions of one's competitors. To protect against such losses, insurance is available. There are two kinds of insurance: General and Special.

General Insurance is overall coverage of one's assets, which include spaceships, warehouses, factories and goods. Add up the cost of one's fleet and warehouses and the cost of factories and goods at the time of purchase. If the warehouse, factory or goods are on a planet with a law level of 2 or 1, multiply that cost by 2; if they are on a planet with a law level of 0, multiply by 3. Divide that sum by 100 and round down to the nearest whole number. That quotient is the amount of Hecto-Trans (HT's) that must be paid during the Bid Phase for General Insurance in the current Game-Turn. Thus, a player with total assets of 1,050 HT's will pay 10 HT's for insurance for the turn. If anything happens to a player's property, the bank will cover the loss. A player may also purchase General Insurance for just one system or one particular set of properties; if this is done, and other properties are lost or damaged, the player receives no compensation for what was not insured. All insurance purchases are noted on the player log.

Special Insurance is for dangerous trips, and also covers the transportation of passengers. A player may pay 2 HT's per passenger group insurance; if for any reason the player is unable to deliver those passengers to their destination, the bank pays the penalty. Likewise, if a ship enters dangerous space, defined as any system with a law level less than 3, General Insurance will not cover the value of that ship or its cargo. Special Insurance, with a premium equaling another 1 HT per 100 HT's in value for that ship and cargo, must be paid in addition to General Insurance. Thus, if a player has no General Insurance, he may buy Special Insurance for a particular trip for 2 HT's per 100 HT's in assets.

A player may take on or increase his insurance any time by simply paying the required premium during the Bid Phase of the turn. He may cancel his insurance, in whole or in part, by not paying the premium or by calculating a new premium based on a lesser assessment of values.

Crew Subversion

It is possible through bribery to subvert the quality of another player's crew or even cause it to desert. Subversion costs 10 HT's times the star system's law level. Subversion may be attempted during the Opportunity Phase and the procedure is the same as for making a sabotage attempt, except that the dice roll can be modified +2 if the player also pays the target crew's bounty value in addition to other costs. If the crew has no bounty, add 5 HT's to the amount spent. Use the following table (rolling the dice twice):

(continued on page 43)

Games

Edited by Steve List

Fifth Frontier War™ Game

Designer: Marc Miller
Developers: John Astell and Frank Chadwick
Components: 22" × 26" game map; 720 counters; four 8½" × 11" chart sheets; two dice; box
Game Designer's Workshop, $15
Reviewed by Greg Costikyan

At Origins several years ago, Randy Reed accused Redmond Simonsen of loafing. "You design science fiction games," he said, "so you won't have to do any research."

"On the contrary, it is historical designers who are loafers," replied Redmond. "You can find your facts, OB's and analyses in history books; I have to make them up."

A good science fiction game is a simulation of an SF situation. The first task of an SF game designer is to imagine the universe he wishes to simulate, and flesh out his assumptions in detail. If he's working from a book (say doing a *Known Space* series game), his task is quite similar to that of an historical designer's, since he has a series of references to work from. If not, he must do the same kind of detailed work any SF writer does before writing a story.

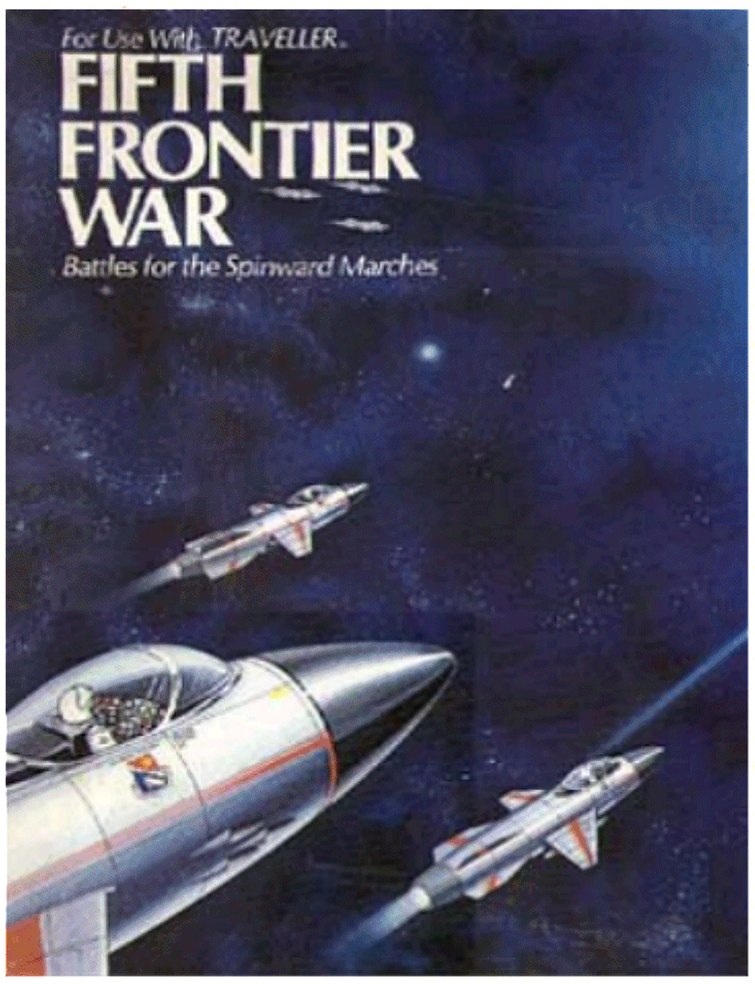
Unfortunately, all too many designers are content to dress up historical subjects as "science fiction" (leading to battleship games played in space), or to simulate idiotic subjects. ("*Star Gore!* You lead the forces of freedom against the evil Emperor Zizlebartz himself!"). Not Marc Miller.

Miller has an advantage, of course; he's built up an entire universe to use with the *Traveller*™ game. *Fifth Frontier War* is set in this universe and makes the same technological assumptions that *Traveller* does. In other words, *Fifth Frontier War* is a *simulation* of the events outlined in several issues of the *Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society*™ magazine (dealing with an Invasion of Imperial territory in the Spinward Marches by the forces of the Zhodani consultate) and of the technology described in *Traveller*. It's a fine and innovative simulation — and a good game besides.

The most striking thing about the *Traveller* ship system is the huge amounts of fuel which ships must carry — sometimes as much as 50% of a ship's volume will be devoted to tankage. Even so, few ships carry enough fuel to make more than one interstellar jump, and ships must refuel between jumps. Luckily, fuel is widely available — it consists of raw hydrogen, which can be scooped from a handy gas giant or electrolyzed from a nearby ocean. This does mean, though, that supply of fuel is vitally important for any military operation in the *Traveller* universe.

So it is in *Fifth Frontier War.* In the game, there are four possible sources of hydrogen: gas giants, oceans, naval bases, and star ports. Anyone can refuel at a base or port, assuming the player owns the port; however, star ports can refuel only a limited number of ships per turn. Some ships are "stream-lined" or "partially stream-lined"; stream-lined ships can refuel instantly at a gas giant or ocean, but others may be required to wait a turn to refuel.

Being forced to wait a turn can have an important impact on operations in the game. Too, until the players fully comprehend the implications, they can do stupid things. For example, if a star system is without a gas giant, an invading force must conquer the inhabited planet in order to use its oceans, star ports, or bases. In one game I played, a player jumped to such a system without any ground troops to conquer the planet; his fleet was thus trapped for several turns until he could divert his forces to conquer the planet.



Another example of how *Fifth Frontier War* simulates the elements of *Traveller* is the command system. In *Traveller,* there is no such thing as "FTL radio." The fastest way to transmit a message is to have it carried by a ship. Consequently, initiative on the part of fleet admirals becomes extremely important since operations cannot be conducted by a supreme admiral behind the lines. Moves for each player's fleets must be plotted four or five turns ahead of time; however, each admiral has a "plotting rating" between 0 and 4. A fleet with an admiral needs to have its moves plotted only as many turns in advance as the admiral's plotting rating — thus giving the "0" rating admirals a real jump on their inferior colleagues. This simulates the fog of war as well as the initiative (or lack thereof) of certain commanders quite well; it would be rather interesting to see the system applied to a Civil War or Napoleonic game.

Another interesting aspect of the game is the variability in unit strengths. Ground units vary in strength from a combat strength of 1 (representing a battalion) to strengths of several thousand (representing whole armies). The Combat Results Table is an odds-ratio table with odds ranging from 1-100 to 100-1; despite the wide disparity in strengths, it works quite well. This, too, takes some getting used to; all the worlds may look alike on the map, but an unwary player who jumps to an enemy system with 500 planetary defense craft is in for a rude shock unless he has truly overwhelming force. Star systems are highly variable in the extent to which they can defend themselves.

Most of the other game systems are what one would expect. Combat between fleets occurs in combat rounds, repeated until one side is eliminated or chickens out and jumps from the system (assuming he's managed to refuel — a key point; this can make it quite difficult to force an enemy to battle). Spacecraft can bombard planets and land ground troops. The fact that ships "live off the land" by refueling at each planet without supply lines means that deep penetrations of enemy territory can take place.

A number of very nice minor touches permeate the game. For example, the Ine Givar terrorist movement, mentioned in several press releases in the *Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society,* are represented by guerrilla units on a number of planets. The map covers the Spinward Marches, described in previous *Traveller* supplements. The distribution of star systems channels potential routes of Zhodani attack along a number of paths, adding a chess-like strategic element to the game. The better Imperial admirals are well down on the chain of command (of course!), but an "Imperial Warrant" may be issued by the Emperor to one admiral, allowing him to assume supreme command.

The game does have a number of problems. For example, each star system has an off-board box which details specifics of planetary defenses and so on. Referring to these boxes is somewhat awkward, and it doesn't help that the hex numbers of star systems are not repeated in the appropriate boxes. It would have been easy to print hex numbers as well as names, and it seems a peculiar oversight that this was not done.

Second, the game takes forever to play. There can be as many as 70 Game-Turns, and each turn takes half an hour to an hour. That's a lot of time to devote even to an excellent game.

Third, there may be a balance problem. The total strengths of ships and ground units available to both sides are approximately equal, but practically the entire Zhodani fleet begins on the board while Imperial units enter in dribs and drabs. If the Imperium loses more than a few ships during the initial Zhodani attack, it becomes quite difficult to gain enough strength to mount a counterattack; conversely, toward the end-game the players will be evenly matched at best unless the Imperium has managed to destroy a number of Zhodani ships during the Zhodani attack. It's by no means impossible for the Imperium to win, but the odds seemed stacked in favor of the Zhodani. (Of course, this may be the "historical" situation as outlined in the pages of the *Journal*.)

These are quibbles. *Fifth Frontier War* is perhaps the most innovative and interesting science fiction game to have been published in the last year. Its strategic complexities are intriguing, it's fun to play and — a rarity — it is an excellent simulation of an SF situation. GDW shows again that they are without peer in the design of serious science fiction.

Ultra-Warrior™ Game

Design: Thomas Zarbock
Components: 17" × 21" map, 108 counters, 14-page rules booklet, ziplock bag
Task Force Games, $5

Reviewed by Tony Watson

Ultra-Warrior is a tactical SF combat game that deals with the confrontation of powerfully-armed individual soldiers in the distant future. The designer has reached back into history for his rationale, likening the Ultra-Warriors to the knights of medieval times. In the 23rd Century, when space aboard cryogenic colony ships is at a premium, technology is substituted for numbers and a handful of extremely well-armed men assume the roles of guardians and peacekeepers. By virtue of their high-tech weapons and armor, the Ultra-Warriors enjoy a position of considerable power over the regular citizenry, a position we are told that can be used for good or evil. Some Ultra-Warriors choose honor over greed, and a new code of chivalry is established. Others do not, and the stage is set for clashes of good and evil, and the worlds of human space pin their hopes on the new knights-errant.

So much for the background of *Ultra-Warrior,* which however tenuous, does serve to set up the situations and mechanics portrayed in the game.

Ultra-Warrior is a fairly simple game, with easily understood and executed mechanics. It plays quickly, about thirty minutes per game, primarily because of the few decisions that each player needs to make in a turn. As a rule, players only control one or two Ultra-Warriors in a given scenario. Each scenario pits one or possibly two Ultra-Warriors against a similar size force. Each soldier is essentially an energy system with a set number of energy points to expend in a variety of methods. A record sheet is created for each combatant, which lists the total energy remaining to the warrior, the current defensive shield allotment, the number of damage points his environmental control suit (read "armor") has sustained, and the warrior's life level (or wound) status.

Each turn, the players first allot energy to shields. This is the prime means of defense for the warriors and will have to last for the entirety of the turn. The turns themselves are divided into six impulses, and during each a warrior can expend one action point, which generally allows him to fire a weapon, or move one hex, though some more complex tasks or movement through difficult terrain requires two action points and hence two consecutive impulses. An initiative die roll is made at the beginning of each turn to determine who moves first in that turn's impulses; having the initiative is sometimes a slight tactical advantage.

If an Ultra-Warrior should choose to spend an impulse firing against the opposition, he can choose from five different weapons. These are universally available; that is, all warriors can choose from the entire list every time he decides to fire. Weapons vary in the amount of energy they cost to fire, the amount of damage they will do if they strike the target, and the chance they have to hit. Some weapons are more specialized, such as smoke rounds, which are used to provide cover, and energy disks, which pass unhindered through shields. The procedure to determine hits is simple enough. Range is cross-indexed with weapons types to yield the number on two dice or less that must be thrown to hit the target. Resulting damage is first absorbed by shields, then EC suits and finally (and quite often fatally) by the Ultra-Warrior himself.

Perhaps the most innovative feature of the game is the way it handles terrain. The map is blank, save for codes corresponding to terrain set-up configurations; the exact set used is listed in the scenario played. Terrain is represented by counters: forests, lava, ice, water and fire. Due to the power of the weapons employed, terrain itself can be changed, with appropriate counters substituted. Heat blasts can change forest into fire hexes and clear terrain into lava, for example. This helps to keep things moving and prevents the game from becoming a total slugging match between warriors at a standstill. Very often the changed terrain is lethal to warriors and forces its occupant to move out on his next impulse.

The game system used in *Ultra-Warrior* works well — nice and tight and no major bugs in the rules — but it's also a bit dull. With only one or two counters per side, tactical movement decisions are at a minimum. One could say that victory goes to the player most careful about using the energy available to him, but this isn't a whole lot different from saying that the player who has more energy to begin with or can roll better is going to win. Except for the scenario introducing five sorts of aliens, each with some unique nuances, the Ultra-Warriors are generally identical except for the size of their initial energy packs.

This is not to say that *Ultra-Warrior* is a bad game; the game plays fairly well, the rules are concise, and the physical quality is up to Task Force's usual good standards. Rather than being a bad game, *Ultra-Warrior* is something of a bland game, whose features wear thin after only a few playings.

Helltank™ Game

Design: Phil Kosnett
Components: 12" × 14" map, 126 counters, 28-page rules booklet, die, box
Metagaming, $4

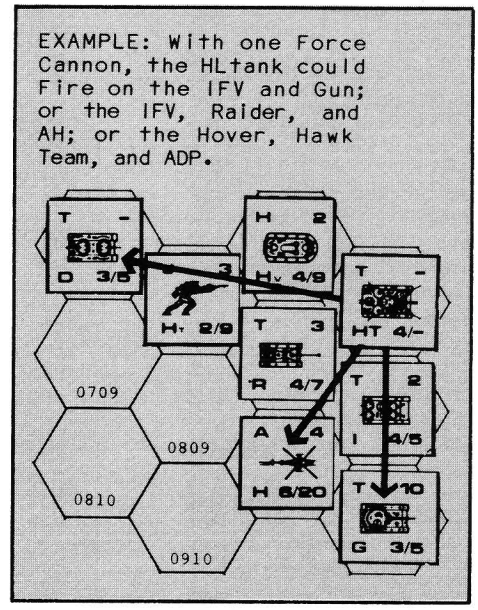
Reviewed by Tony Watson

Helltank is a MicroGame focusing on tactical armored combat in the first years of the next century. It is packaged in the now familiar small game format that Metagaming pioneered in the SF field: a small map, a limited number of counters and short and fast playing rules. Now, one might recall that this same company has already released a game in this same format and of essentially the same subject, the now classic *Ogre,* which was followed up by a sequel, *GEV.* This puts *Helltank* in good company while at the same time placing upon it the same sort of onus that the younger brother of a star athlete *cum* class valedictorian faces when following in his footsteps into the same high school.

Helltank, while probably not destined to become the hit that *Ogre* was, is a fine game. Designer Phil Kosnett has some experience in this area, having designed two futuristic tactical games for SPI: *War in the Ice* and the less memorable *Titan Strike!* In an acknowledgement on the title page, Kosnett offers thanks to "the designers of all the tactical armored games he has played," and the influences shows.

The setting for the game is the first forty years of the 21st Century. Conventional armored warfare remains a viable method of conducting actions, due to political and doctrinal restrictions on tactical nukes and the refinement of composite armor (perhaps a projection of Cobham ceramic/steel armor currently under development). Couple these trends with general technological improvements, and you have a battlefield populated by hovercraft; air defense platforms; advanced attack helicopters; standard, multi-turreted and raider tanks as well as the closest thing to a land battleship, the heavy launch tank (Helltank) with six turrets and weighing in at 100 tons. All of these vehicle types, plus a few more, are represented in the counter mix. Norman Royal's vehicular illustrations lend the playing pieces a nice futuristic touch.

Action in *Helltank* can best be described as quick, bloody and fluid. Most of the game's fluidity stems from its sequence of play. It's a semi-simultaneous, action-reaction approach in that the winner of an initiative die roll executes movement and possible combat with one of his units, followed by the opposing player doing so with one of his, and then back to the first player and so on, until all counters have had a chance to execute. Options open to a unit are extremely liberal. It can move, or combine movement with fire at any point during movement, or just fire, or simply do nothing. Each vehicle type has two movement ratings, a standard movement allowance and an evasive movement allowance. During its execution, or in response to enemy fire (provided the targeted unit has not already moved or fired), a unit may use its considerably increased evasive movement allowance. As well as adding a little zip to getting around, evasive movement gives the unit using it a favorable die roll modifier when being shot at. The sequence of play is even further spiced up by the inclusion of an opportunity fire rule which allows



the non-moving player to fire any of his units at the moving vehicle should it happen to come into range.

Combat in *Helltank* is simple, and generally quite bloody. Units may fire at targets within range; due to the opportunity fire rule, it's nice to have a weapon with a longer range than the intended victim or its covering force. The type of vehicle firing is indexed against the target and the number obtained, or less, must be rolled to destroy the vehicle. Defensive die roll modifiers are given for evasion, covering terrain such as city or forest hexes, while the attacker can garner modifiers for attacking at close range in cities using certain infantry-associated vehicles.

The only exception to the "one hit totally destroys the target" rule is the game's namesake, Helltank. Helltanks are awesome machines (though not quite as imposing as the Ogres in the game of the same name). They can mount six weapons, owning player's choice, and are the only vehicles capable of mounting the very deadly force-cannon. Helltanks can accrue up to thirty points of damage before being destroyed; the exact amount of damage a given shot will do is a function of the range and the die roll made to hit. Helltanks can lose their weapons one at a time, and the somewhat slight chance exists to "brew" one up as a result of a lucky (1 in 36) critical hit.

Helltank has five scenarios, depicting various kinds of actions. Each scenario can be played in any of seven different time periods. Some more complex units, such as air cruisers, jet pack infantry and Helltanks, are available only in later periods, and more mundane units tend to cost less as time goes on. It's difficult to speak of balance in the scenarios, since specific forces are not given, just budgets to be spent on units. Much depends on how the two force mixes interact; if your opponent invested heavily in attack helicopters and air cruisers and you neglected to purchased air defense platforms, well...

A certain tactical richness exists in *Helltank*. The fluid sequence of play rewards the player who carefully considers where and when to move a unit, when to fire offensively and when to hang back and await a more defensive opportunity fire shot. The varied counter mix, with strengths and weaknesses of the different vehicles complimenting one another, and the scenario provisions, which allow players to pick their own forces, allow experimentation in tactics.

Helltank isn't without its problems; the rules could have been tightened in some places and the type face used in the rules book approaches downright ugly, but it's an interesting little game, a sure winner for the asking price.

Starfire III: Empires™ Game

Design: David Weber
Components: 11" × 14" map, 28-page rulebook, ziplock bag.
Task Force Games, $3.95

Reviewed by Steve List

This is not a game in its own right, but rather a set of rules for running an interstellar empire-building campaign using the *Starfire*™ and *Starfire II*™ games for combat resolution. Also, it adds some weapons and capabilities not found in the other two games, and to a small extent amends them

(17.3) MODIFIED HIT PROBABILITY & WEAPONS EFFECTIVENESS CHARTS

WEAPON TYPE	RANGE 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21-24
Gun	11	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Missiles	0	4	7	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	8	8	7	7	6	-
Cap. Mis.	0	4	7	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	8	8	7	7	7	7
Beam (any)	12	12	11	11	10	10	9	9	9	8	8	8	7	7	7	6	6	5	-	-	-	-

EFFECT:

WEAPON TYPE	RANGE 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21-24
Gun	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Missile	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-
Laser	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	*	*	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Force Bm.	5	4	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	*	*	*	*	*	-	-	-	-
Engy. Bm.	5	4	3	2	1	1	1	*	*	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pri. Bm.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	*	*	*	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cap. Mis.	-	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

NOTE: Minefields, of either type, attack only at range "0" and have a hit probability of "8" + 1 per each expended movement point of the target in excess of 3.
Fission minefields inflict one damage point per hit.
Fusion minefields inflict two damage points per hit.
A "*" result is 1/2.
STARFIRE II weapons tables are not modified.

Since *Starfire* is needed for play, a brief description of its mechanics follows. Spaceships are designed by taking various hulls (rated for the "hull spaces" they contain) and filling them with engines and a variety of offensive, defensive and non-combat "systems," which vary in cost and the number of hull spaces they take up. Each system has a letter code, and a ship is represented by a counter on the map and a string of code letters on a sheet of paper. Ships are moved in a semi-simultaneous manner after which combat is resolved. Damage is inflicted in terms of "hits," each of which destroys a system on the target ship. *Starfire II*, while playable independently of the original game, basically served to expand the types of ships available.

The *Empires* map should be copied (which is difficult due to its size) so each of from 2 to 6 players can have a copy. Ideally, an additional person serving as a referee should be involved as well, but the rules are written so that the game can be played without one. Basically, each player starts with a home stellar system containing 2 or more settled planets, which provide him with income. This revenue is used to build spaceships and invest in technology research and in setting up colonies.

Interstellar movement is by means of "warp lines" which allow instantaneous transfer from star to star. In addition to the six possible home stars on the map, there are 60 others identified by a two digit number generated by rolling a 10-sided and a 6-sided die. When a player first transits a warp line, the dice are rolled to see where it terminates. Since the six home worlds are not coded for this dice roll, there is no way for a player to discover a new warp line leading *to* one of them. All he can do is discover a system with a previously established line leading from a home star. This system gives the players a protected rear — nobody can discover a "back door" into an enemy home system.

When a player discovers a new system, dice rolls are used to determine the number and types of planets, the system's potential value, and whether or not it has intelligent life that may fight. In the latter case, another player assumes the role of the hapless natives until they are suppressed. In any event, in order to get economic benefits from a system, the player must build a merchant marine fleet to shuttle its goods around, and invest a considerable amount of money to "incorporate" it. Systems containing conquered races (either independent or taken from another player) must be garrisoned to forestall a chance of them rebelling.

Play of the game involves, aside from economic activities, pre-written movement plots for each fleet each player has. Ships may move through a number of warp lines each turn equal to their engine rating (which is also the movement allowance in tactical combat) except that a ship must stop in an unfriendly or unexplored system. All movement is executed simultaneously, and combat situations are resolved using *Starfire* rules.

The interface of the two-month-long turn of the *Empires* strategic game with the *Starfire* system is a bit rocky. A combat turn represents only 10 seconds, with about 20 turns (or 3 minutes or so) being a typical battle. Nor do space rules mesh convincingly. The SF tactical map is 28 × 34 hexes at ½ light-second per hex, for a total area of about 8¼ trillion square miles. This sounds like a lot of space, but it is only about .03% of the area within the orbit of Pluto, and the system generation rules will put a star and up to 9 planets on the map. The SF system is (for excellent reasons) not famous for its realism and scientific accuracy.

The *Empires* rules are themselves not a paragon of clarity, with contradictions and ambiguities showing in some key places. However, it is an interesting attempt at providing a campaign structure for the SF system. Use of the tactical games for resolving combat means that an *Empires* campaign will take many sessions to complete, making it a good candidate for club play. Given an abstract combat resolution system, it could be a decent postal game played with a referee. All in all, it should be of interest mainly to fans of the existing *Starfire* games.

Software

Edited by Ian Chadwick

Space Ace 21™ Game

Synergistic Solar, Inc.

Spaceship combat; 1 or 2 players, excellent interaction, BASIC, sound effects

Graphics: **A**; Playability: **A**; Simulation Accuracy: **B**; Enjoyment: **A**

TRS-80 MOD I cassette or disk version

Space Ace has provided me with many hours of enjoyable play and will continue to do so in the future. It is a game of combat in 2 or 3 dimensions between two spaceships, either solitaire against the computer or against an opponent. There are three scenarios: Smuggler, in which you try to escape past your opponent and dock at your base; Refuel, a shoot-em-up in which you can return to your base to refuel and re-arm missiles/torpedoes; and Phoenix Decathlon, in which you must play against all ten of the computer's pre-designed ships, one at a time.

The real delight is in being able to design your own ships by choosing the 21 modules that make up a ship. You must include at least one each of engine, bridge, fuel, generator and life support, but you can also choose from armour, cargo, disruptor, missile rack, torpedo tubes, phaser, sensor and "zero" (for a slimmer ship). The modules each have their own graphic design and appear on your side of the screen as you build your ship. When you take hits in combat, pieces of the ship are blasted away from your screen image! Your display also gives your position, speed, remaining fuel, missiles, torpedoes, ship's mass and distance to base.

Each turn you may change your velocity (once a speed is attained, a ship in space will remain at that speed without having to expend fuel), heading (including homing in on your opponent — a handy command), and fire one of your weapons. Weapons have different ranges and your current speed and expected position are taken into account by the computer when effects are calculated. Sensors improve your chance of hitting a target. Modules can take varying degrees of damage according to type. Weapons also require generator capability and fuel to fire properly.

Ace is great fun solitaire or 2 player. Each game is fast and furious, and trying to design the optimum ship is quite a challenge, My only complaint was that the computer had only ten pre-designed ships and no allowance was made to design the computer's ship. I took care of that myself by adding to the program the necessary lines (ah, the joys of BASIC). *Space Ace 21* is highly recommended for the science fiction game buff tired of arcade shootouts and looking for a more realistic bit of fun. It comes with another game (how about that — two for the price of one) on a flip side called *The New Starship Voyages*™, a variation of the *Star Trek* theme (known affectionately as "Space Potatoes"). It is interesting, but nowhere near as good a game as *Space Ace 21*; consider it a freebie.

Ian Chadwick

Meteor Mission II™ Game

Big Five Software

Arcade style game, 1 or 2 players, no interaction, machine language, sound effects

Graphics: **B**; Playability: **A**; Enjoyment: **B**

Meteor is the only game from Big Five that hasn't provided me with endless hours of amusement. Up to their usual high standards of graphics and playability, the problem lies with the game itself: It is boring for anyone but the youngest players.

Play consists of maneuvering a spaceship through a field of moving meteors to land at platforms, pick up one of six stranded astronauts and return him to your mothership. The platforms shrink in size with each landing but their point value goes up accordingly from 100 to 300 points. After that they vanish, and when all are used, they are replaced with another set at the lowest point value. Points are gained from returning the astronauts (another set of six comes when the previous set is either destroyed or rescued) and from destroying meteors.

As usual there are twists: At random times a burst of energy descends from the top which can catch and destroy your ship. An alien spaceship lurks behind some of the meteors, and can come out and destroy you unless you shoot it first. Big Five excels at such chrome in their games.

Still, the challenge is limited and the game is really not terribly exciting. This is prime stuff for the younger set but otherwise pale in comparison to other efforts.

Ian Chadwick

Oo-Topos™ Game

Sentient Software

Space text adventure for a solitaire player

Graphics: **na**; Playability: **C**; Enjoyment: **C**

48K Apple II with Applesoft in ROM, or Apple II Plus and one disk drive, DOS 3.3

No, Virginia, all text adventures are not created equal. Some are better than others. In fact, some are much better than others.

Oo-topos is one of the better text adventures I've run across in my forays into adventureland. Perhaps the reason is it was written by a science fiction writer, Michael Berlyn, who also wrote (in book form) *Crystal Phoenix* and *Integrated Man.*

The idea behind the story is this: you were "volunteered" to fly to Galactic Council's space station to pick up a vial of anti-plague serum to stop the infection on earth. You were given that, and a load of valuables to transport back.

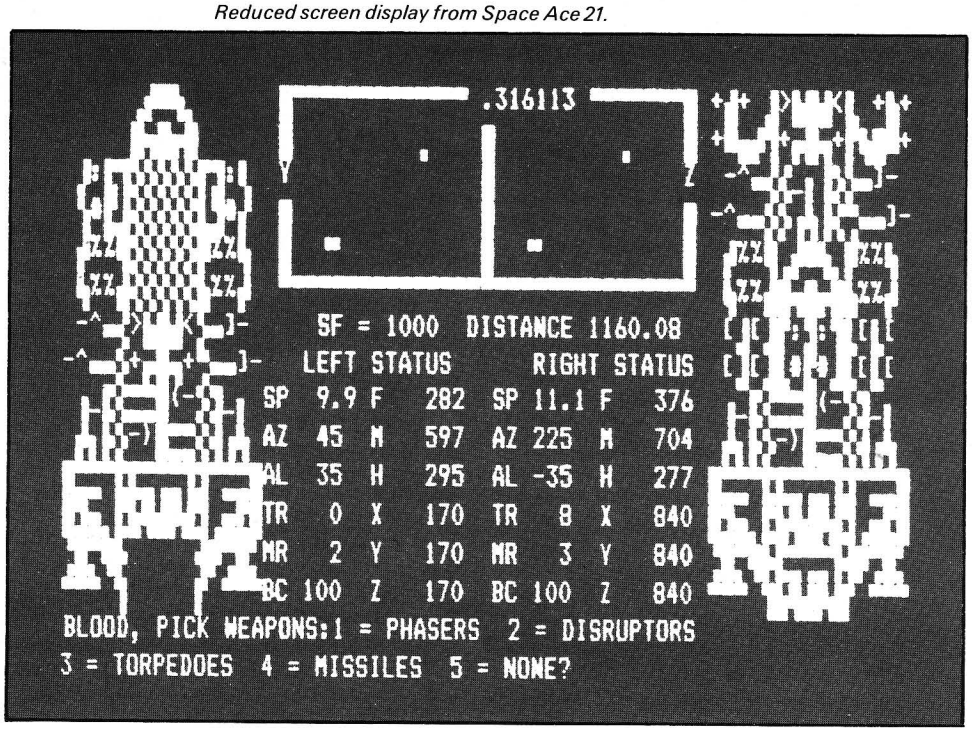
Unfortunately, your ship was hauled out of space by aliens, cracked open and looted, while you were placed in a cell. Now, you must: 1.) Escape the prison and its traps; 2.) Gather up your scattered cargo; 3.) Rebuild your ship; and 4.) Depart. No problem, right?

The descriptions of the rooms and passageways are good, as you'd expect from a professional writer. According to the instructions booklet, *Oo-topos* has a much larger vocabulary than other adventures, and includes "over 70 different 'verb classes.'" The escape route and passageways are convoluted enough to allow anyone to get hopelessly confused. The program also affords all eight compass points, allowing you to get lost in mazes in any direction.

Aside from the fact that you can be resurrected, this isn't a particularly unusual game. If mental jigsaw puzzles are your favorite hobby, *Oo-topos* should keep you happily occupied for many, many hours.

Dale Archibald

Reduced screen display from Space Ace 21.



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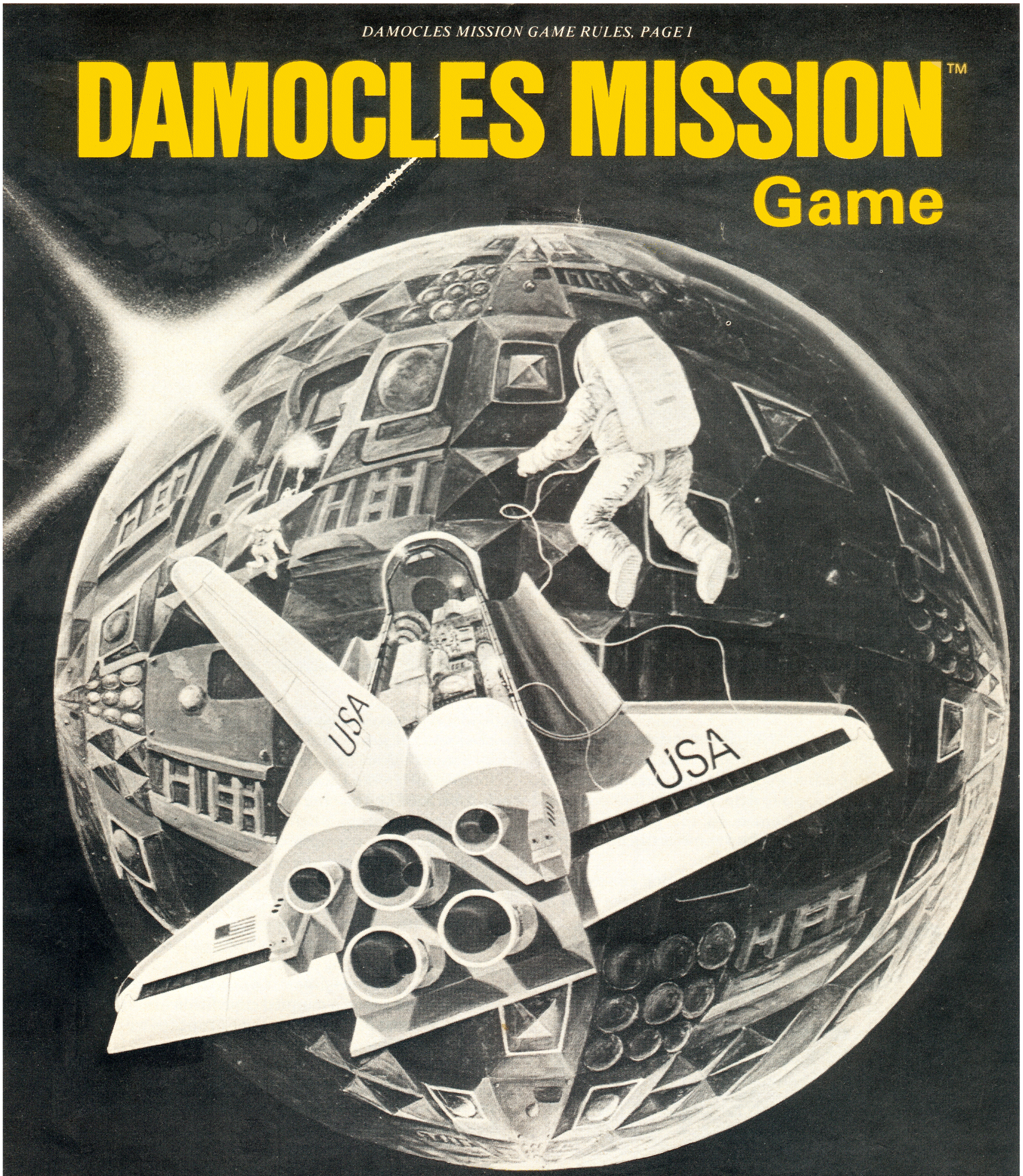
DAMOCLES MISSION™ Game



Rules Booklet

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1.0 **Introduction**
2.0 **Game Components**
3.0 **Game Terms**
4.0 **How to Set Up and Start the Game**
5.0 **Equipment and Its Use**
6.0 **Skills and Their Use**
7.0 **Sequence of Play**
8.0 **How to Investigate a Tile**
9.0 **Control Tiles**
10.0 **Artificial Intelligence Tiles**
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13.0 **Accessways**
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15.0 **Equipment Damage and Repair**
16.0 **Sections of the Artifact**
17.0 **Information Messages**
18.0 **Information Points**
19.0 **Alien Objects**
20.0 **How to Win and Replaying the Game**

Read This First:

The rules to the DAMOCLES MISSION game are organized by major topics, called Sections, arranged in the order in which they occur in the play of the game. Each such major topic is given a number and a name, following which is usually a General Rule or description that summarizes the rules in that Section. This overview of each rules Section is followed by numbered paragraphs, called Cases, that provide specifics of the rules. Note that the numbering of the Cases is a decimal form of the Section numbers.

Players should examine the sheets of tiles and counters and then quickly read through the rules, without trying to memorize them. The game should then be set up and a "trial run" made, with reference to the rules Cases as questions arise. In this way, a player can become accustomed to the game system before moving on to a full-fledged version of the DAMOCLES MISSION game.

Rules Questions:

We hope you enjoy this game. Should you have any difficulty in interpreting the rules, please write to TSR Hobbies, phrasing your question so that it can be answered by a simple sentence, word, or number. You must enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Write to: TSR Hobbies, Rules Question Editor for DAMOCLES MISSION Game, PO Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Inventory of Game Components:

Each copy of the DAMOCLES MISSION game should contain the following components:

One sheet of 50 die-cut cardboard tiles
One sheet of 140 die-cut cardboard counters
One rules folder

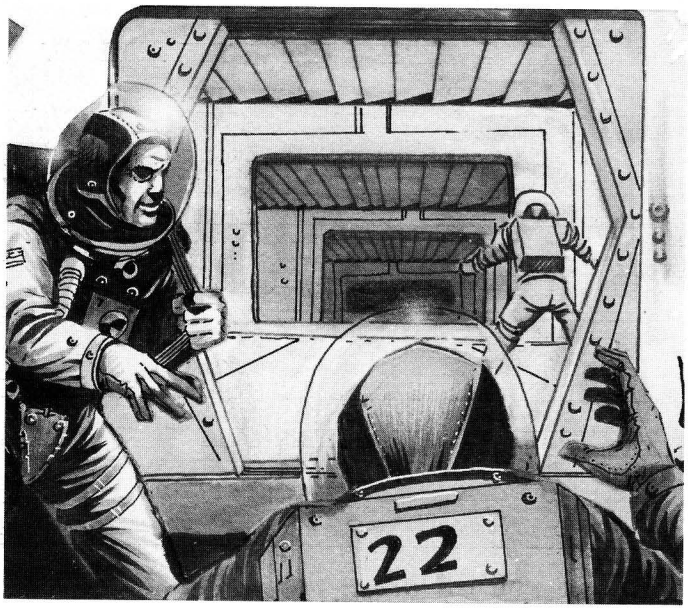
Each boxed copy of the DAMOCLES MISSION game (not the *Ares*™ Magazine edition) should also contain:

Two dice
One game box assembly

PROLOGUE:

In May of 1988, an amateur astronomer detected what he thought was a comet between Jupiter and Mars, moving toward the sun. Within a few weeks this original sighting was creating a furor, for no tail was to detected from the comet. As the larger telescopes were trained on the object, it soon became clear that this was in reality some artificial satellite entering the solar system.

As the object approached, there was much concern and not a little panic. Once the artifact moved within the orbit of Mars, it began adjusting its trajectory and it soon became obvious that it was moving towards earth. Communications by a multitude of nations were attempted with the object, but to no avail. In the United Nations there were debates on how to greet the approaching object; some favored sending nuclear weapons to destroy it before it reached earth, others stressed more peaceful attempts at communicating. As the talks dragged on, the ominous intruder drew nearer. In August of that year, the giant artifact moved into a geosynchronous orbit above earth. It gave off no detectable emissions as it hung silently above the planet.



Even while the object was approaching earth, NASA was frantically organizing an emergency Shuttle mission to investigate this new neighbor. Officials were certain that the Soviets would send a manned expedition of some kind to visit the object, and perhaps even the Europeans would attempt to divert one of their rockets to study the earth's latest satellite. The race was on as to who would be the first to visit and explore the strange object. Meanwhile, the military also prepared what measures they could in case the object proved to be a threat to the human race.

NASA won the race to visit the artifact. Within two months of the object's arrival, the Space Shuttle *Discovery* was on its way to investigate. Containing a mixed group of astronauts and scientists, plus sufficient supplies and scientific equipment for the extended mission, the Shuttle held all mankind's hopes and fears of what might be the "First Contact" with an alien race. Popular journalism nicknamed the operation the "Damocles Mission," playing on the fears of the populace concerning the possible consequences should the mission prove a failure.

[1.0] Introduction

COMMENTARY:

The DAMOCLES MISSION™ game is a solitaire adventure which places the player first in the position of mission planners at NASA as they organize the mission. After the Space Shuttle *Discovery* and her crew rendezvous with the artifact, the player then assumes the role of the crew itself as it begins to explore and experience this first alien contact. As the investigation begins, the team knows the following facts about the artifact:

1. Extensive and varied radio communications beamed at the artifact have failed to elicit any response from it.

2. Upon rendezvous, initial investigations found several hatches which could be opened and places to comfortably dock the Space Shuttle *Discovery*. Once the hatch was opened, readings taken failed to reveal any atmosphere, internal gravity, or illumination.

3. To facilitate ease of exploration, a portable base camp was assembled and will be transported with the team as they begin their trek. This is set up every evening to allow the team members to doff their suits, replenish their oxygen supplies, and perform various maintenance tasks.

The game starts as the team enters the hatch and begins to investigate the first tile on their way into the artifact.

[2.0] Game Components

GENERAL RULE:

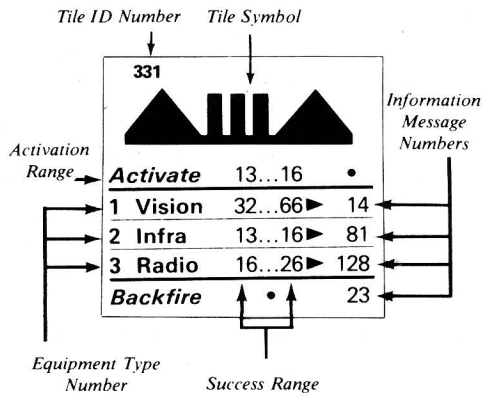
The DAMOCLES MISSION game consists of this rules booklet, fifty 1"×1¼" tiles, eighty ½"×½" counters, and sixty 1"×½" counters. Two six-sided dice, a pencil, and a flat playing surface are also required for playing the game.

CASES:

[2.1] The tiles represent various systems inside the alien artifact that the team will encounter.

As the team investigates these tiles, they will gain information concerning the purpose and origin of the artifact and discover whether these tiles are **On** or **Off**. The **On/Off** status of each of the tiles is examined at the end of the game to determine the level of victory.

SAMPLE TILE (Face-Up)



The **Tile ID Number** is a three-digit number in which the first digit represents the overall tile color, the second digit the symbol color on that particular tile, and the third digit the tile symbol. The overall tile color separates the tiles into three groupings, each representing one of the different sections of the artifact. The symbol color ties together different subsystems within the same section. The tile symbol represents the sub-system encountered in that tile. Thus tile #231 is in the green section (2), has a blue symbol color (3), and is a **Control** tile (1). (**Note: Control** tiles end with a 1 or 2; **Intel** tiles end with a 4, 5 or 6; and **Power** tiles end with a 7, 8 or 9.)

The **Equipment Type Number** is used to identify and record (via an Equipment Identity marker) which type of equipment was used to investigate the tile last.

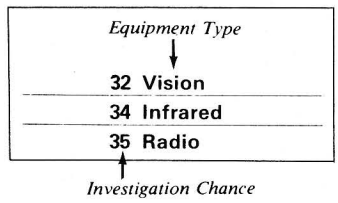
The **Success Range** consists of two numbers; when a tile is investigated, the player throws two dice. If his result is within the Success Range, he will be able to gain information about the tile by referring to the Information Message. If his dice result is *less* than the Success Range, the investigation results in a Backfire.

The **Activation Range** consists of two numbers. Once the player has turned ON a **Control** tile, he may attempt to activate it by rolling two dice. If the result is within the range, the tile is *activated* and may be used to alter the status of other tiles; if the result is ever less than the range, the tile turns Permanently OFF for the remainder of the game.

The **Information Message Number** identifies which message (see the Information Message Section at the end of the rules) must be read after a successful investigation or a Backfire.

The **Investigation Chance** on the face-down tile is a number which the player must roll less than or equal to on two dice before the tile can be turned over and the investigation continued.

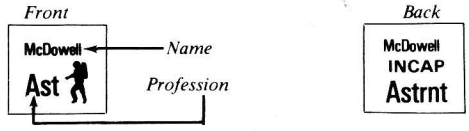
SAMPLE TILE (Face-Down)



[2.2] The ½" counters represent the various team members, the team itself, the Shuttle, their equipment, and the Equipment Identity, Activated, and Danger markers.

A Team Member counter has two sides, one representing a healthy and the other an incapacitated member.

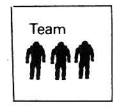
TEAM MEMBER



The front side identifies the member and indicates his profession; each profession has particular skills that may be called into use when investigating the artifact (see 6.0).

The Team marker and the Shuttle counter are used to locate the relative positions of the team and their transport as the artifact is explored. The *Discovery* counter is placed on or adjacent to the first tile which is investigated. The Team counter is moved throughout the artifact as they explore it.

TEAM COUNTER



SHUTTLE COUNTER

The Equipment counters are used to denote which pieces of equipment are being carried by the team members and whether the equipment is currently operable or damaged.

EQUIPMENT COUNTER

While the piece of equipment is in operable condition, the front side of the counter is up; if the equipment is damaged, the back side of the counter is then used. On the back of the rules booklet is a Mission Sheet which the player may use during play to keep track of information. A Team Member counter and an Equipment counter should be placed on the spaces provided for each member of the team. This sheet will help the player remember the status of the members and equipment, and what equipment each member is carrying.

The Equipment Identity markers are placed on a tile that has been investigated to record the results of the information (**On** or **Off**) and which piece of equipment was used to perform that investigation (corresponding to the Equipment Identity number on the tile investigated).

EQUIPMENT IDENTITY MARKER

The front (green) side indicates the tile is **On**; the back (yellow) side indicates the tile is **Off**. Whenever the **On/Off** status of the tile changes during the game, the appropriate side of the marker should be turned face-up. The marker is placed on top of the tile and left there. Any Backfire results are also indicated by using the markers with a **B** printed on them; the green side indicates the tile is **On**, the yellow side **Off**.

The Activated markers are placed on any Control tile which is **On** and eligible to be used to activate other tiles in the same section of the artifact. The Danger markers are

placed on any tile which the Investigation Message reveals may contain danger (which is at that point unknown) or as a marker of the player's devising, reminding him, for instance, of damage to be taken when the team enters that tile.

ACTIVATED/DANGER MARKER

Front *Back*

[2.3] **The ½"×1" counters represent Accessways, and Impassable and Permanently Off markers.**

Each Accessway counter has a blank side and a numbered side. When the game is set up, these are shuffled and placed blank side up on the playing surface to one side or another. Whenever an Accessway is discovered, one of these tiles is selected at random, flipped over to reveal its numbered side an appropriately placed.

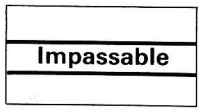
ACCESSWAY MARKER

Close Chance

The Impassable markers are used to note those tiles which are impassable, as noted in the Information Messages. The Permanently Off markers are used to note those tiles which, either through the information messages or through team error, have been rendered Permanently Off for the remainder of the game.

IMPASSABLE/PERMANENTLY OFF MARKER

Front



Back

[2.4] **Two six-sided dice are used in the play of the game.**

These dice are read in two ways: a **one-die** reading and a **two-dice** reading. Rolling one die yields the normal 1-6 result. When rolling two dice, they must be read sequentially, rolling one at a time. The first result is the "tens" digit, and the second result is the "ones" digit of the resulting two-digit number. It is advised that either dice of different sizes or colors be used for these rolls, so that two dice may be rolled at the same time and read properly. If a red die and a white die were being used, and the player had designated the red die to be the tens digit, a roll of 4 on the red die and 6 on the white die would yield a two-dice result of 46, not 10.

Note: The use of team members' skills in play will have the player add or subtract modifiers from two-dice results. The result of these modifiers may yield numbers which may otherwise be unattainable on the dice. For example, subtracting 4 from a two-dice result of 21 yields 17, and subtracting 6 from a two-dice result of 31 yields 25. In the first example, the result would still not satisfy the conditions which require the player to roll 16 or less, but in the second example the results would satisfy a condition of rolling 26 or less. As long as the final modified number is less than or equal to the specified limit given, the roll is successful.

[3.0] Game Terms

Activated. Refers to a Control tile which is eligible to alter the On/Off status of other tiles of the same symbol color in that section.

Artifact. The alien craft.

Backfire. An attempted investigation producing a totally unpredicted result, which may be either beneficial or harmful. The result of a Backfire is generally bad for the health of the team.

Control Tile. A tile representing a sub-system of the artifact which allows manipulation of other sub-systems.

Incapacitated. When a team member becomes injured due to an accident. An incapacitated member will travel with the team, but may not operate any equipment. He may *carry* equipment, however. When an investigation message asks if a particular individual is present, incapacitated members do *not* count towards fulfilling the condition.

Information Messages. A numbered paragraph in the Information Message Section to which the player refers after the investigation of a tile. Depending on the conditions within the message, the player may be referred to another paragraph.

Information Points. Victory points accumulated by successfully investigating tiles.

Investigation. The act of attempting to gain information about a sub-system of the alien artifact, represented by a tile. Each tile has listed three types of equipment which may be used to investigate that tile. Other types of equipment may not be used on that tile.

Intel Tile. A tile representing a sub-system of artificial intelligence used to collect and process information.

Known Tile. A tile which is flipped over to reveal its symbol type.

Object. An alien item of some kind discovered by the team during an investigation.

On/Off Status. Represents whether the tile or section is On (meaning working and operational) or Off (inactive and incapable of working).

Power Tile. A tile representing a sub-system power source of any kind.

Random Determination. Asks the player to apply the results of a one-die roll to determine a choice. This is most commonly used when ascertaining against which side of a tile an Accessway counter is to be placed. The method is done as follows: assign a number to each side of the tile. The top side would be 1, the right side 2, the bottom side 3, and the left side 4. If any one of these four numbers is rolled, that side is assigned the Accessway counter. If a 5 or 6 is rolled, the die is re-rolled until an eligible result is obtained. This same principle is applied with variations to any random situation.

Section. One major system of the artifact delineated by the overall color of the tile. There are three sections in the artifact.

Symbol Color. The symbol at the top of the face-up side of a tile appears in a color. Symbols of the same color in the same section are related.

Uncontrolled Tile. Refers to either a Power or Intel tile in a section being explored which has no Control tile of the same symbol color face-up in the same section. Thus, there is no chance for the player to control (alter its On/Off status) the tile.

[4.0] How to Set Up and Start the Game

GENERAL RULE:

The first time the DAMOCLES MISSION game is played, a Time Value of **200** is assigned to the player. This value is used to determine the number of days available to complete the exploration of the artifact and to return to the shuttle. This value is divided by the number of members in the exploration team (rounding all numbers up), and the result equals the numbers of days available. In each subsequent replay of the game, the level of victory (20.0) achieved in the previous game will yield a modifier which will either be added to or subtracted from this value of 200; the result is equal to the number of days available for the next play-through. The Mission Sheet on the back of the rules booklet is used to keep track of the number of days spent during each exploration. The player chooses the number of crew members each time he plays.

CASES:

[4.1] **The player first chooses which members will make up the exploration team for this play-through.**

He may choose between 3 and 6 members from the following groups:

Astronaut (Ast). There are four available astronauts. At least two astronauts must be taken to pilot the Shuttle on each mission. Astronauts are not considered scientists.

Astronomer (Am). A scientist with a solid knowledge of the cosmos, including galaxies and solar systems outside our own.

Biologist (Bio). A scientist knowledgeable in all aspects of biology, including the study of the relationship of man to tools and their use.

Engineer (Eng). A scientist with a solid knowledge of how things work, both mechanically and electronically.

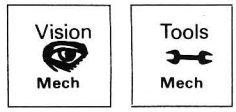
Physicist (Phy). A scientist specializing in high energy propulsion systems.

Semanticist (Sem). A scientist specializing in symbols, words, language, and the interrelationships among them.

[4.2] **Once the team members are chosen, the player then chooses the pieces of equipment he wishes to bring with the team.**

Each member of the team may carry only one piece of equipment, and some equipment may be used only by an individual skilled enough to interpret its data. The team may bring with them as many pieces of equipment as there are members in the team. The equipment is summarized as follows:

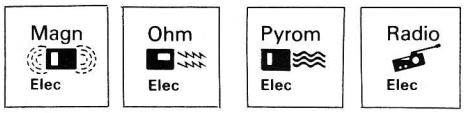
MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT



Vision Equipment. This involves various light sources, tactile investigatory methods, and other "hands-on" equipment which will not damage the item being examined. This may be used by anyone and *must* be taken along by the team.

Simple Tools. Cutting tools, hammers, torches, and so forth, designed to "break into" the item being examined. Only an *Astronaut* may use simple tools.

ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT



Ohmmeter. Used to measure electrical activity. Anyone may use this equipment.

Magnetometer. Used to measure the strength of a magnetic field. Only an *Astronaut* may use the magnetometer.

Pyrometer. Used to measure heat radiation in small electronic equipment. Only an *Astronaut* or *Engineer* may use it.

Geiger Counter. Used to measure radioactivity. Only a *Physicist* or *Astronaut* may use the geiger counter.

Radio Receiver. Used to detect radio frequencies on a wide spectrum. Anyone may use this.

Infrared. Used to detect infrared radiations. Anyone may use this.

Recording Equipment. Includes all manner of electronic and visual record-making equipment. Anyone may use this.

[4.3] **Once the team and its equipment are chosen, the player then separates the *tiles* by overall color (not by symbol color).**

He will then have two piles of 17 and one pile of 16 tiles. He then places them face-down and randomly chooses 12 from each pile. The tiles not chosen are not used for this play-through, and are placed aside.

The player then randomly chooses one tile from each pile, shuffles the three tiles blindly, and picks one at random. This is the tile of entry into the artifact, and the other two are placed back in their respective piles. The player marks off one day on his Mission Sheet. He then selects the counters representing the Shuttle, the team, each team member, and the piece of equipment each team member carries. The counters representing the team and the shuttle are placed next to the tile; the team members are laid out on the Mission Sheet, with the equipment each member is carrying in the box next to him. All these counters should be displayed with the undamaged side facing up. The player then places all the Accessway counters blank-side-up in a pile near the playing area. These should be thoroughly mixed.

The player then begins the Sequence of Play (7.0), which will guide him through the play of the game.

[5.0] Equipment and Its Use

GENERAL RULE:

To investigate a tile, the player must select one of the three kinds of equipment listed on the unknown side of the tile. Each piece of equipment has an Investigation Chance, which the player must roll less than or equal to on two dice before the tile can be turned over. The investigation may have resulted in a Backfire, which will not be known to the player until the tile is flipped over and the Success Range checked. Each type of equipment will discover something different about the tile, and each has its own range for success or Backfire.

CASES:

[5.1] **Each team member may carry one piece of equipment at a time.**

If a team member is incapacitated during the exploration, he and his piece of equipment will travel along with the team, but the equipment cannot be used unless carried by another team member. Should a team member die during the investigation, his equipment may either be left behind or taken by another team member (who must then leave his equipment behind). The team may later return to a tile where equipment has been left and reclaim it during the course of the game. Equipment may be switched only in Step 8 of the Sequence of Play (7.0).

[5.2] **Equipment is divided into two categories: Electronic and Mechanical.**

Electronic equipment has a higher chance of becoming damaged (see 15.0), and may also be repaired by any Astronaut or Engineer. Mechanical equipment has a lower chance of damage, but cannot be repaired. When equipment is damaged during a game, it is flipped over to its *damaged* side.

[5.3] **Each type of equipment can be broadly categorized as to its effectiveness and efficiency in terms of the game.**

Vision Equipment. Usually has a high investigation chance, but also a high Backfire probability. Useful, but dangerous.

Simple Tools. Has a medium investigation chance and a medium Backfire; definitely a "blast of dynamite" approach.

Ohmmeter. Has a medium investigation chance and a low Backfire chance. When it does Backfire, the results are often impressive (usually in an unfortunate way).

Magnetometer. Has a medium investigation chance with a low Backfire.

Pyrometer. Has a very low investigation chance with almost no chance of Backfire.

Geiger Counter. Has a low investigation chance and a low Backfire chance.

Radio Receiver. Has a medium investigation chance and a medium Backfire.

Infrared Detector. Has a medium investigation chance and a medium Backfire.

Recording Equipment. Used only to reread previously investigated messages.

The Information Messages contain descriptions related closely to the type of information that would be discovered by the piece of equipment being used in that circumstance. The player should be guided in his choice of equipment and method of investigation by the knowledge of what each piece may do and what may be learned, as well as by the raw percentage chances for the equipment that is indicated on the tile face.

[5.4] **Equipment may become damaged as a result of investigation.**

Unless otherwise specified, the equipment damaged is the type being used to investigate the tile. Damaged equipment may be repaired by any healthy Astronaut or Engineer who is with the team (see 15.0).

[6.0] Skills and Their Use

GENERAL RULE:

Each team member will have a certain skill or skills intrinsic to his profession. Each type of skill will give certain benefits to the team as they proceed with the exploration of the alien artifact. Some skills give specific advantages throughout the game, while others will only be called into play by the information messages. It is entirely possible that a specific skill will not be used on a particular exploratory attempt. The following skills are ascribed to the specific team members:

Astronaut. Needed to fly the Shuttle to and from earth. May attempt to repair damaged electronic equipment. Information messages may require his presence. Usually required in attempts to make use of the artifact.

Engineer. Subtracts **6** from any investigation or Activation dice rolls involving a known Control tile (this subtraction may *not* cause a successful roll to become a Backfire). May attempt to repair damaged electronic equipment. Also may be called into play during investigation through messages.

Biologist. Possibly called into play through the information messages.

Astronomer. Possibly called into play through the information messages.

Physicist. Subtracts **8** from any investigation dice roll on a known Power tile (this subtraction may *not* cause a successful roll to become a Backfire). May be called into play through the information messages.

Semanticist. Subtracts **2** from any investigation dice roll on a *face-down* tile while using Vision Equipment (this subtraction may *not* cause a successful roll to become a Backfire). Possibly called into play through information messages.

[7.0] Sequence of Play

GENERAL RULE:

The DAMOCLES MISSION game is played according to the following sequence of Steps, which must be implemented in the order specified. After the last Step has been completed, the player returns to the first Step and begins again. The sequence is designed to allow the various, separate game functions to occur in the correct order relative to the expenditure of time. The game ends whenever the player has the team return to the Shuttle with the intention of traveling back to earth or runs out of days, whichever occurs first.

After the game has been set up (see 4.3), the player should begin the game, commencing with Step 1.

Step 1. The team may now investigate any face-down tile to which they are adjacent (except a tile that the team has just left).

Choose a piece of equipment that is being carried by a team member; it must be one of the eligible pieces of equipment listed on the face of the tile that is to be investigated. Next to the equipment type on the tile face is an Investigation Chance. That number must be rolled less than or equal to on two dice. The roll may be modified due to the investigating team member's skill (see 6.0).

Any number of rolls for any combination of equipment types may be tried until a successful result is obtained or the player decides to move on. When a successful result occurs, the tile is flipped over and the player moves on to Step 2. If the player wishes to move on without a successful result, go to Step 4.

Note: Any time doubles are rolled (i.e., the same number on both dice) during this procedure, one day has elapsed.

Step 2. The team now discovers the results of their successful investigation of the tile.

Once a tile has been flipped over, the Success Range for that equipment type should be examined. If the die roll result is less than the Success Range, a Backfire has resulted and the player should refer to the Backfire message printed at the bottom of the tile. If there is no Backfire, the Information Message corresponding to the equipment type that was used in the investigation should be referred to. In either case, the player then reads the appropriate message and implements any actions the message indicates.

If there is a "No Information" message, go to Step 3. If there is any other kind of message, proceed to Step 4.

Step 3. The team may attempt another investigation of the tile.

If the first message gave a result of "No Information," then a second investigation may be attempted by using a second kind of equipment. The player now knows not only the Investigation Chances of the various equipment types, but also the Backfire chances.

Steps 1 and 2 are repeated for this new investigation. If the team discovers another "No Information" result, no further investigations of this tile may be attempted, and the player must go to Step 4.

Note: As in Step 1, a roll of doubles uses up one day for the team.

Step 4. The team must move onto any tile which is adjacent to the Accessway counter it now occupies.

Step 5. The team may now try to Activate a Control tile.

If the team does not occupy a Control tile *or* is on a Control tile that is Off, proceed to Step 6.

If the team occupies a Control tile that is ON, they may now attempt to Activate this tile and use it to alter the On/Off status of any tile in that section of the artifact with the same symbol color as the Control tile.

Each Control tile has an Activation Chance printed on it. The player now rolls two dice to Activate the tile. If the result is within the Activation Chance range, the tile becomes Activated. Once Activated, the Control tile may be used to alter the On/Off status of other tiles. Each successful result allows the player to alter one tile, changing it either from On to Off or from Off to On. Any number of tiles may be altered from one Control; each tile to be altered must have a separate Activation roll attempted for it each time its status is to be changed. Any number of Activation attempts may by made from a Control tile that is On.

If a Backfire occurs during this procedure (that is, the player rolls a result that is less than the lower number of the Activation Chance range), it results in that Control tile being turned Permanently Off for the remainder of the game. Place a Permanently Off marker on the tile.

Note: Whenever doubles are rolled during an Activation attempt, one day is expended.

Step 6. The player may now attempt to have any team member who is incapacitated recover from his wounds.

The player rolls one die. If the result is a **1**, the member recovers; if the result is a **6**, the member dies. No other die roll has any effect. Only one roll may be attempted for each member per turn.

Step 7. The player may now attempt to fix any damaged electronic equipment.

The team must have a healthy Astronaut or Engineer present to attempt any repairs. The player rolls one die. If the result is **1**, the equipment is fixed; if the result if **6**, the equipment is broken and may not be fixed for the remainder of the game. No other die roll has any effect. Only one roll may be attempted for each piece of equipment per turn.

Step 8. The player may now reallocate the pieces of equipment among the team members.

Only equipment in the possession of a healthy team member may be used for investigation in Step 1.

Step 9. The player now checks to see if any Accessways have closed.

Each Accessway adjacent to the tile the team occupies must be checked. The player rolls two dice for each adjacent Accessway counter. If the result is greater than the *Close Chance* listed on that counter, the Accessway has closed and the marker is removed from play. Any result less than the Close Chance results in the Accessway remaining open (at least, for the time being).

Step 10. The team may now attempt to find Accessways leading out of the tile they occupy.

If the team occupies a Power tile, roll dice until a **16** or less results; for an Intel tile, until a **26** or less; for a Control tile, a **33** or less. A successful result indicates an Accessway has been found. The player should randomly determine which side of the tile the Accessway is found on (any side is eligible, including sides which already have open Accessways).

An Accessway counter is then selected from the pile and placed against the indicated side. The player may now place another tile face down and adjacent to the Accessway marker, if no tile already is there. The team may continue to search for another Accessway if they so desire. There may be a maximum of *three* Accessway markers adjacent to a tile at any one time.

After all searching for Accessways has been concluded, the team must move onto an adjacent Accessway counter. *The action of moving onto a newly discovered Accessway counter uses up one day of time.* The team may use Accessways that have been previously found at no extra cost in days, but each time they enter a tile, the player must check to see whether or not any Accessways have closed.

Note: If doubles are rolled at any time during the search for Accessways, one day of time is used up.

Once Step 10 is completed, the player returns to Step 1 and continues through the Sequence of Play again.

[8.0] How to Investigate a Tile

GENERAL RULE:

The only method of obtaining information about the alien artifact is by investigating the tiles. Each tile represents one specific subsystem within the artifact. This sub-system may be able to accomplish "work" on its own, or it may need other sub-systems linked with it. The player should attempt to investigate each face-down tile he encounters, carefully choosing the piece of equipment to perform the investigation. Once the investigation is successful, the tile is flipped over to reveal data, including Information Messages. Reading these messages will give the player information about the sub-system in this tile and may send the team off on further investigations. The team may only investigate the tile with one piece of equipment, unless a "No Information" message is obtained on the first investigation; in this instance, the team may use another piece of equipment for a second investigation. Also, information messages may allow the team a second chance of investigating a tile. The player must carefully balance the Investigation Chance of each eligible piece of equipment with its known chance of Backfire (see 5.0) in order to investigate a tile with the minimum of risk.

CASES:

[8.1] When investigating a face-down tile, any combination of carried equipment types may be used until a successful roll results.

The team may, for instance, first try vision (failure), then switch to pyrometer (failure) then return to vision (failure), then try vision again (success). Once a successful result is obtained, the tile is flipped over, and the Success Range for that piece of equipment is examined. If the die result is less than the listed Success Range, the Backfire message

(listed at the bottom of the tile) is read. Otherwise, the Information Message for that particular equipment type is read. Any instructions in the appropriate message are to be followed.

If a "No Information" message is obtained from the first investigation, a second investigation may be conducted with the tile face-up. Now the player will know not only the Investigation Chances, but the Backfire Chances as well. This second attempt may be done now or at any later time when the team may be passing through the tile. If the second message also results in a "No Information," no other attempt at investigation may be made on that tile.

If an Information Message allows the player to investigate a tile a second time, the results of the second investigation will determine the status of the tile at the end of the investigation. For instance, if the first investigation resulted in the tile being On and the second in the tile being Off, the final result would be that the tile has turned Off.

[8.2] **An Investigation Message will indicate whether the sub-system is On or Off.**

Before the team leaves the tile, the player should place an Equipment Identity marker on the tile, indicating the ID number of the equipment type used for the last investigation and whether the tile is On or Off. The green side of the marker indicates the tile is on and the yellow side that it is Off; a Backfire marker should be used in the same way. If only one investigation has been attempted with a "No Information" message resulting and the team then leaves, the player should note on his Mission Sheet this information so that, if he ever returns to this tile, he may then attempt the second investigation.

[8.3] **No more than two investigations per tile may be attempted.**

The information messages may yield a conditional result which may require rechecking on a future day, such as "Until turned Off, this tile will generate a 2G gravity field inside the artifact. Treat this tile as On." The player may wish to turn this tile off at some future time and place from an Activated Control tile. To keep track of this information, the player should use the tile ID number found in the upper lefthand corner to write a note on his Mission Sheet as a reminder.

The investigation of a tile ends when (1) a message other than a "No Information" result has been found; (2) the team moves on without having flipped the tile over; (3) a second investigation has been carried out (assuming a "No Information" was received on the first investigation or an Information Message has allowed a second investigation). Once the investigation is over, Step 4 of the Sequence of Play must take place.

[8.4] **During the investigation of a tile, whenever doubles are rolled on the dice, one day has elapsed.**

Doubles may occur in Steps 1, 3, 5 and 10 of the Sequence of Play.

[8.5] **If the team returns to a tile where they have already completed their investigation, they may re-read the Information Message as indicated by the Equipment Identity marker.**

When this message is read, any activities it calls for must be enacted. Thus, if the player has forgotten that this particular tile incapacitated a team member and reads the message, he will have another team member become incapacitated.

[8.6] **A tile which becomes Permanently Off due to the result of an Information Message may never be turned On again.**

Place a Permanently Off marker on the tile. The team may safely pass through this tile, but they may never alter its status in the future.

[8.7] **A tile which is Impassable due to the results of an Information Message may never be crossed by the team.**

Place an Impassable marker on the tile. If the team later manages to alter the status of this tile from an Activated Control tile, the marker is then removed.

[8.8] **If the first tile the team investigates proves to be Impassable, the game must be begun again.**

Select one tile from each of the three sections, shuffle them, and choose one randomly. This will be the section the team will begin to investigate. The team loses **5** days finding another opening. The process will be repeated until the team finds a tile which may be crossed.

[9.0] Control Tiles

GENERAL RULE:

Tiles with this symbol appearing on their face-up side are classified as Control tiles. They represent various sub-systems in the artifact which allow the team to alter the status of other tiles (sub-systems), to alter the status of entire sections (delineated by tile color), or even, ultimately, to affect the artifact as a whole. It is through intelligent use of the Control tiles that a player increases his chance of victory in the game.

CASES:

[9.1] **Control tiles are investigated in the same manner as the other two tile types, except that once an On result is achieved, that tile may be Activated.**

The tile must first be On before an Activation attempt may be tried. On each Control tile, there is an Activation Range. The team, by using one of its healthy members, attempts to activate the tile by rolling two dice until a result is obtained that is within the range given. If any result is *less than* the range given, the tile immediately turns *Permanently Off* for the remainder of the game. If doubles are rolled at any time during this process, one day is expended.

Once the Activation roll succeeds, an *Activated* marker is placed on the tile. From then on, any other sub-system (except for other Control tiles) of the same symbol color in the same section of the ship may have their On/Off status altered by use of this tile. To do so, a team member must once again attempt a successful Activation dice roll while on that tile. If the result is successful, the status of the uncontrolled tile in question may be altered On or Off as desired. Each tile that the player wishes to alter must be rolled for individually. If at any time a result is *less than* the Activation Range, the Control tile turns Permanently Off.

[9.2] **An Activation attempt may be performed only while the team physically occupies the Control tile in question.**

Changing another tile's On/Off status via the Activation procedure may alter the effects that tile has on play. The player should make sure to implement any changes that the alteration of the status of a tile may cause.

Example: An uncontrolled Power tile has been turned On by the team's initial investigation and results in artificial gravity being generated, thus slowing the team's movement. Later in play, the team reaches a Control tile of the same symbol color, Activates it, then turns the Power tile Off. This action shuts the artificial gravity off as well.

Since victory is measured partly in how many *sections* of the artifact are turned On, and whether or not a section is On is based on how many tiles within that section are On, using Control tiles to alter the On/Off status of tiles directly relates to victory levels that the player achieves.

[10.0] Artificial Intelligence Tiles

GENERAL RULE:

Tiles with this symbol appearing on their face-up side are classified as Intel tiles. They represent various sub-systems of the artifact related to the processing and collecting of information. While Off, these tiles usually represent no threat to the team. While On, they may attempt to do any number of things, from examining the team to attempting to communicate with them. Having a number of uncontrolled Intel tiles in any one section is not necessarily a dangerous situation for the team. In all cases, the Information Messages for each tile will explain its use.

[11.0] Power Tiles

GENERAL RULE:

Tiles with this symbol appearing on their face-up side are classified as Power tiles. They represent various sub-systems of the artifact related to power sources of different kinds. While Off, these tiles usually represent no threat to the team. While On, they will be a constant source of danger unless shut Off. Of course, some systems in the artifact need power to operate, and some Power tiles must be On for victory purposes. The player must balance the need for these tiles carefully. If the team is exploring a section which has in it a number of Power tiles which are On, their chances of causing incapacitating damage to themselves are great.

[12.0] Exploring the Artifact

GENERAL RULE:

The artifact is explored by moving the team from tile to tile, investigating each one as the team moves along. Moving through the artifact expends time in units of one day, which are tallied on the Mission Sheet by the player. As exploration of one section of the artifact is exhausted, a new section is begun. Once all the tiles have been explored or time is running out, the team returns to the Shuttle and tallies victory. The player should allot enough time to allow the team to return safely to the Shuttle.

CASES:

[12.1] **As the team moves from a tile to a new Accessway, one day is expended.**

This amount of time needed to move through the artifact may be altered due to situations which develop during play and the investigations of the tiles. Whenever the team retraces its tracks through the artifact, they do not use up a day upon entering a known Accessway. However, each time the team is on a tile, the player must roll the dice to see if any of the Accessways adjacent to that tile have closed. The team may have to use up their time searching for new Accessways.

Time (in units of one day) is also expended whenever doubles are rolled on two dice in the performance of any game function at any time (except when checking to see if Accessways have closed). As these days are expended, the player should keep track of them on the Mission Sheet.

[12.2] **Upon placing an Accessway adjacent to the tile the team currently occupies, a face-down tile is placed there (if no tile already exists).**

There may never be more than three Accessways adjacent to a tile at any one time. There may be up to two Accessways connecting two different tiles.

[12.3] **The kind of tile the team occupies will affect their chances of discovering new Accessways.**

If the team occupies a Power tile, a **16** or less must be rolled on two dice to discover an Accessway. If the team occupies an Intel tile, a **26** or less must be rolled. For a Control tile, a **36** or less must be rolled. Any number of rolls may be attempted until a way is found. Once found, an Accessway counter is picked from the pile and placed face-up on a randomly determined side of the tile. **Note:** If the type of tile is unknown, the discovery roll must be **26** or less.

[12.4] **Any markers used as reminders to the player (e.g., Danger, Permanently Off, etc.) are placed in any location convenient to the player on the tile as the information is revealed.**

[12.5] **Once a section has been chosen at random during the set-up (see 4.0), the player must choose new tiles from that section's pile of unused tiles.**

Once all the allotted tiles of that section have been exhausted, a new section may be entered (chosen at random) and that section is explored until exhausted. Often an Information Message will allow the player to explore a new section from the the tile the team currently occupies, and if there is a choice as to which section to choose, it should be made randomly. Most times in play all available tiles for a section will be connected by Accessways, but occasionally sections will be broken up. This is to be expected.

[12.6] **During the game a player is expected to jot down on the Mission Sheet short notes concerning certain tiles of interest.**

Unless the team is carrying recording equipment, no Information Message may ever be re-read after being investigated unless the team currently occupies that tile when the message is checked again. Obviously, a player may circumvent this rule in any number of ways, but the game will lose much of its suspense if he does so.

[13.0] Accessways

GENERAL RULE:

The Accessways lead the crew from one tile in the artifact to another. When the team investigates a tile, they are considered to be investigating it from the Accessway they currently occupy. Once a tile has been successfully investigated, the team must move onto the new tile unless it proves to be Impassable in which case they then move back to the tile they just left. The team spends one day moving from a tile to a new Accessway; they do not spend time moving back through Accessways that have already been discovered. Each time the team enters a tile, the player must check to see if any Accessways that are adjacent to the tile have closed. There may be a maximum of three Accessways adjacent to a tile at any one time.

[14.0] Team Member Incapacitation and Death

GENERAL RULE:

As a result of investigating the artifact, members of the team may become incapacitated or even die. Usually the team member who is incapacitated is the one holding the equipment that was used in the investigation. Sometimes a random member must be chosen, according to the results of an Information Message. If a member is incapacitated, he may recover over time. During Step 6 of the Sequence of Play, one die is rolled for every member currently incapacitated. If a **1** is rolled, the member recovers and becomes fully active again. If a **6** is rolled, the member dies of his wounds. Incapacitated members travel with the team at no penalty to the team's movement, but they may not use equipment or their skills. The counters representing members who are incapacitated should be flipped over to their incapacitated side.

[15.0] Equipment Damage and Repair

GENERAL RULE:

As a result of investigating the artifact, the equipment may become damaged. Most often it is the equipment being used in the investigation which is damaged. Sometimes a random piece must be chosen, according to the instructions of an Information Message. Equipment (usually only electronic, though a message might allow mechanical as well) may only be repaired by an Astronaut or an Engineer during Step 7 of the Sequence of Play. One die is rolled for every piece of equipment currently damaged. If a **1** is rolled, the equipment is repaired. If a **6** is rolled, the equipment is damaged beyond repair and is removed from play. Damaged equipment may be carried along with the team at no penalty. The counter representing the damaged piece of equipment should be flipped over to its *damaged* side.

If a team member dies during the game, the equipment he was carrying may be exchanged for another member's equipment. The team must leave one piece of equipment behind as they continue to explore th artifact. They may later come back to reclaim the equipment as desired. Place the Equipment counter on the tile with the side up indicating if it was damaged or operational.

[16.0] Sections of the Artifact

GENERAL RULE:

The three sections of the artifact are delineated by the overall color of the tile. There are 17 white tiles, 17 green tiles, and 16 yellow tiles. Only 12 of each are used in any one particular play-through. Once the investigation of a section has begun, it continues until the tiles for that section are depleted or an Investigation Message is read resulting in a new section being found.

CASES:

[16.1] **Each section represents a separate functional unit within the overall structure of the artifact.**

The Information Messages related to each section will, by implication, explain the functioning of each.

[16.2] **At the end of the game, the number of tiles which are On in each section will determine whether or not that section as a whole is considered On (or operational) and will affect in part the player's level of victory.**

Various Information Messages will also ask the player to determine whether a section is On or OFF at that particular point in the game. Below is a list, by section, of how many of each tile type must be On in that section for it to be considered On:

White Section:	2 Control 2 Intel 4 Power
Green Section:	2 Control 4 Intel 2 Power
Yellow Section:	2 Control 2 Intel 1 Power

[17.0] Information Messages

COMMENTARY:

The numbered messages at the end of the rules give the player the heart and soul of the DAMOCLES MISSION game. They are revealed as a result of investigations of the tiles and *should never be read independently of that procedure.* In other words, unless

some specific instruction tells the player to read a message, he should not look at that paragraph. When examining any particular message, the player should take care not to examine any adjacent message; this knowledge will lessen his enjoyment of the game.

Many of the messages instruct the player to examine a current situation for certain requirements, with the result possibly sending the player to another message. In any of these cases, the player should take into account only information which he knows to be true or false *at the instant of the examination.* Thus, if it takes 5 Power tiles being On in this section of the artifact to turn On another section, and there are only 4 On at the time the player checks them, the additional section in question does *not* turn On later in the game if a fifth Power tile goes On, unless the team returns to that tile and re-reads the message.

Information Messages pertaining to a particular tile and equipment use may be read at the time of initial investigation and at any later time if the team returns to that tile. If recording equipment is carried by the team, however, it may be used to read any message at any time during Step 7 of the Sequence of Play (in effect, the team has made notes as to what they have discovered). The effects of any recorded message will occur *only* if the team is *physically present* in the tile where the message was found and *reading the message* a second time.

Included in these messages is a simple panic-preservation system which simulates the effects of stress on the team members in a totally new situation. This system involves careful tally of the time the team has been in the artifact, and it allows the pressure on the team to get worse as time goes on. The player should be aware that the longer the team remains inside, the greater the risk of Backfire and incapacitation.

These messages relate the type of information gained to the method of investigation in a substantive way. When a player chooses a type of equipment with which to investigate a tile, he should not use the Investigation Chance as the only deciding factor to guide his choice, but also what *type* of information he wishes to gain.

[18.0] Information Points

GENERAL RULE:

Through the successful investigation of the Information Messages, the team will gain Information Points. These points are used to (1) increase the chance of successfully investigating the remaining tiles in that section; (2) increase the chance of successfully investigating the remaining tiles in the artifact; and (3) increase the level of victory.

CASES:

[18.1] **As each point is gained, the player should record it on his Mission Sheet.**

For each point gained, **1** is subtracted from any investigation roll from then on. This subtraction *cannot* change a successful roll into a Backfire.

[18.2] **Whenever the team enters a new ship section, 3 is subtracted from the present Information Point total.**

This penalty is meant to encourage the player to investigate a section completely before moving on. Note that the Information Point total can never be less than zero.

[18.3] **At the end of the game, the Information Point total is subtracted from the Time Value given with the level of victory.**

This result may increase the level of victory of that play-through and will decrease the Time Value of the next play-through.

[19.0] Alien Objects

GENERAL RULE:

Throughout their exploration of the artifact, the team may encounter various alien objects which they may be able to operate and carry around with them. Successful use of these items will increase the team's chances of investigating further sections, and may later be called into play through the Information Messages.

These items may be carried by any non-incapacitated member of the team *in addition* to any piece of equipment he may already be carrying. The artifact's "name" or description (as given by the information message) is noted on the Mission Sheet along with the team member who is carrying it. The effects of the particular object will be noted in the Information Message where it is found.

[20.0] How to Win and Replaying the Game

GENERAL RULE:

Victory in the DAMOCLES MISSION game is based on a combination of successfully exploring the artifact and keeping the team members alive and healthy. Also, the amount of knowledge mankind gains from this exploration will increase the level of victory.

CASES:

[20.1] **To ascertain the level of victory achieved once a game is completed, the player uses the list given below and finds the description which best describes the current status of the artifact and the expedition team.**

Once the description which most accurately describes the situation is found, the player will be given a numerical rating with the description. From this value is subtracted the number of Information Points the team has accumulated through their investigations. The result is added to the Time Value of the game just completed to determine the Time Value used for the next play-through. In this manner, the better a player does in one play-through, the fewer days he will have to complete the next exploration of the artifact, and the worse he does in one game, the more days he will have in the next.

1: The expedition team cannot return to earth *or* are all incapacitated (+120). The mission is a Total Failure.

2: More than half the team is incapacitated, no sections of the artifact are turned on, but the team can return to earth (+100). The missions is a Total Failure.

3: Fewer than half the team (but more than one member) are incapacitated, no sections of the artifact are turned on, and the team may return to earth (+80). The mission is a Failure.

4: Fewer than half the team (but more than one member) are incapacitated, one section is turned on, and the team may return to earth (+60). The mission is a Failure.

5: Only one member of the team is incapacitated, no sections are turned on, and the team may return to earth (+40). The mission is a Disappointment.

6: Only one member of the team is incapacitated, one section is turned on, and the team may return to earth (+20). The mission is a Disappointment.

7: No members are incapacitated, no sections are turned on (0). The mission is Inconclusive.

8: Only one member of the team is incapacitated, two sections are turned on, and the team may return to earth (–20). The mission is a Modest Success.

9: One section is turned on, the team is able to return to earth (–40). The mission is a Modest Success.

10: Two sections are turned on, the team is able to return to earth (–60). The mission is a Significant Success.

11: Three sections are turned on, the team is able to return to earth (–80). The mission is a Significant Success.

12: The team has gained control of the artifact (–100). The mission is a Total Success.

13: The artifact may be manuevered by the team (–120). The mission is a Total Success.

[20.2] **The methods of gaining control of the artifact are detailed in the Information Messages.**

[20.3] **The modification for Information Points increases the level of victory as well as affecting the Time Value.**

The level of success for a mission is given with the descriptions in 20.1. For each 20 Information Points received during a play-through, the level of victory may be increased by one in the player's favor. For instance, if the player found that paragraph number 9 described the situation at the end of the game and he had accumulated 20 Information Points, he would achieve a victory level of Significant Success as described in number 10 rather than the Modest Success of number 9. If he achieved the conditions of number 8 instead, then the 20 Information Points would increase his victory to number 9, but his level of victory in this case would not be changed.

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INFORMATION MESSAGES

These messages are arranged in numerical order from 001 to 258. They should **not be read through**; examination of the messages, other than those to which you are referred during play, will destroy the element of surprise that is so vital to the game. **Note:** When one message instructs you to go to another paragraph, the symbology "► #" indicates which message you should go to.

001. The team stands on a translucent, circular plate which scans each of them with flashing pulses of light and radiation. If it is beyond day 50, one member (randomly determined) is incapacitated. Treat this tile as ON.

002. The equipment causes a series of dials in the wall in front of the team to turn on. If there is a red **Power** tile ON *and* a red **Intel** tile ON in this section, and if an Astronaut is present, then ► 227. Otherwise, simply treat this tile as OFF.

003. The team has inadvertently stumbled into an area of high magnetic flux which damages the investigating member's equipment (only if electronic). The team *loses one day* protecting the other equipment. Whenever the team enters this tile, one piece of electronic equipment (determined randomly) will be damaged. Treat this tile as ON.

004. The investigating member discovers a slight amount of radiation ahead, but there is no danger. *No Information* is available. Treat this tile as OFF.

005. The investigation causes one wall to flash brilliant colors, first red, then yellow, then green. If any blue **Control** tile is ON, then ► 145. Otherwise, the lights stop flashing after a minute; treat this tile as OFF.

006. There is nothing ahead for the tools to affect. *No Information* may be gained. Treat this as OFF.

007. The investigation results in several heavy bursts of radiation aimed at the team member with the equipment; he is incapacitated. The tile is now Impassable until turned OFF (until then, the tile is ON). If it is beyond 50 days, another team member (determined randomly) is also incapacitated.

008. The investigating member stumbles against a large black slab, which discharges a strong electric shock; the member is incapacitated. The tile then turns OFF. If an Astronaut is present, then ► 228.

009. There are swirling metal masses ahead, glowing in the darkness and emitting high heat. There may be danger. Treat this title as ON.

010. The investigating member successfully removes a face plate on a small disk set in a metal plate. The visible light from the disk stops, and the tile turns OFF. An Astronaut with the team has one chance of rolling a **16** or less to turn the tile back ON. The tile may also be turned ON from a **Control** tile of the same color in this section.

011. In the center of the chamber ahead stands a four-foot high humanoid figure. It has a keyboard in its chest with controls in Old English letters. If either a Physicist or Engineer is present, the robot can be activated on a roll of **26** or less; if a Semanticist is present, he must roll a **36** or less for success; if any two of the three are present, they must roll a **46** or less; and if all three are present, they must roll a **56** or less. Only one roll is allowed. If the attempt fails, the robot remains inert. If the tile is later turned ON, there may *not* be another attempt made to activate the robot. If the team activates the robot, then ► 229. Treat this tile as OFF.

012. The team detects strong electrical pulses through a series of tubes that stretch across the chamber ahead. There is no danger to the team. Treat this tile as ON.

013. There are small round disks set in a metal plate in the floor ahead. When the team turns a flashlight on the plate, the disks begin to glow in a pattern. They realize the disks are pulsating in a binary code, repeating the numbers 1 to 100. Treat this tile as ON. Gain 1 Information Point.

014. *No Information* except that a thin membrane loops around the room ahead. Treat this tile as being OFF.

015. The investigating member steps on a glowing white square on the patterned floor. The member is incapacitated by a blinding flash of light only if any other red **Power** tile is ON and *no* red **Control** tile is ON in this section; otherwise, the light is not bright enough to hurt the team. If the member is incapacitated, he recovers as normal; he will not under any circumstance die from this injury (a roll of **6** has no effect). If the member becomes incapacitated by some other method, then he may die from that damage instead. Treat this tile as OFF.

016. The team sees round, soft, yellow amoeba-like extensions lining the wall of the chamber. As they flash light on one of the extensions, other extensions in the wall turn toward them and scan them with light. No harm is done, and after a few moments the extensions shut off. Treat this tile as ON.

017. The investigating member has stepped through an electric eye at the entrance of the chamber. As a result, every *blue* tile in the *entire artifact* turns OFF. Treat this tile as Permanently OFF. Lose 3 Information Points.

018. The chamber ahead looks to be empty. *No Information* is available. Treat this tile as OFF.

019. One of the walls has an iris in it that dilates when light is flashed on it. If the team decides to check what is on the other side, then ► 224. Otherwise, *No Information* may be gained. Treat this tile as OFF.

020. After manipulating the electrical resistance in several dials on a large console in the chamber ahead, the team begins hearing a chirping sound in their helmets. If the team has the recording equipment with them and the Semanticist is present, then ► 231. Treat this tile as ON. Gain 1 Information Point.

021. The surface of a non-reflective screen on one wall has been damaged by the team's tools. If there is an Astronaut present, he may make one attempt to roll less than or equal to **21**. If he succeeds, the tile is ON; otherwise, the tile will remain Permanently OFF.

022. The team has torn a fine webbing covering the floor. The tile is considered OFF, unless there is any red **Power** tile ON in the artifact, in which case ► 232.

023. The investigating member becomes entangled in the fine looping wire in the area. As he extricates himself, the loops collapse. The **Control** tile begins shutting down this section. At a rate of one tile per day, all the ON tiles, radiating out in a clockwise direction from this tile, will turn OFF. Once turned OFF, they may be turned ON again by an Activation attempt from a **Control** tile, but *not* this tile. Treat the tile as OFF. Lose 1 Information Point.

024. The chamber ahead sends a shock wave at the investigating member, who becomes incapacitated. His equipment is also damaged (if electronic). Treat this tile as ON.

025. A gateway with small gleaming disks lies ahead of the team. If they manage to activate this tile, the gateway will allow them to enter another section of the ship if they wish. Treat this tile as ON. Gain 3 Information Points.

026. Ahead of the team is a red-hot membrane made of a pulsating material and stretching across the chamber. Treat this tile as OFF.

027. The area ahead has a highly unstable magnetic field criss-crossing it. There is no immediate danger, but *an extra day* is spent protecting the team's equipment from any potential damage. Treat this tile as ON.

028. The team sees a large vat of clear, glowing liquid ahead. Treat this tile as OFF.

029. There is a small alcove in one of the walls with a series of dials, which have unusual symbols on them. If a Semanticist is present, he has one attempt to roll a **16** or less; if he succeeds, then ► 226. If any blue **Control** tile ON (in this section), then ► 233. Treat this tile as ON.

030. There are four rows of parallel black tubes ahead, stretching from floor to ceiling. If there is no **Power** tile ON in the artifact, then ► 234. If any **Power** tile is ON, then *No Information* is available, and treat this tile as OFF.

031. While exploring this chamber, the team discovers a radio transmission from behind an oval plate on the wall. If they decide to remove the plate and look inside, then ► 235. Otherwise, nothing happens. Treat this tile as ON.

032. The team discovers a hidden, circular alcove in which ten seats are found. The seats face outward and are apparently designed for a humanoid anatomy. If a **Control** tile and an **Intel** tile are already ON in this section, ► 225. If two or more **Power** tiles are ON and no **Control** tiles or **Intel** tiles are on in this section, ► 230. If the requirements for these two instances are not met, then the team discovers nothing else; treat this tile as OFF

033. There is a fine mesh, like that on a tennis racquet, covering the floor of the triangular chamber ahead. The mesh is 4 inches off the floor. As the team crosses the mesh, it slowly gives under their feet and then continues to vibrate, softly rocking the members as they walk. Treat this tile as ON.

034. There are numerous monofilaments which are strung along the walls of the chamber; they are found to carry thousands of individual magnetic pulses in them, each in its own wire. Treat this tile as ON.

035. There is no heat ahead that the team is able to discover. *No Information* is available. Treat this tile as OFF.

036. There are sharp magnetic surges in the walls of the chamber; there may be possible danger. Treat this tile as OFF.

037. The room ahead is cold. *No Information* may be gained. Treat this tile as OFF.

038. The walls, ceiling and floor ahead are opaque and glow dimly. Treat this tile as OFF.

039. The team's lights do not reveal anything; the chamber appears enormous because the surfaces absorb all light. *No Information* may be gained. Treat this tile as OFF.

040. There are numerous electric eyes in the chamber ahead. If any red **Control** tile is ON in the artifact, then ► 236. Treat the tile as OFF.

041. A floating cube in the chamber has one side open up as the team approaches; the team seems to be lured inside by the soft lights there. However, a membrane blocks the opening. If an Astronaut is with the team, he has two attempts to roll a **16** or less to open the way. If successful, the membrane dissolves and ► 258. Otherwise, treat this tile as OFF.

042. The team breaks a gray glass that covers a large metal container in the middle of the chamber. A three-dimensional image appears at the bottom of the container, flashing strange symbols. If the team has a Biologist or Semanticist present, they may attempt to activate the **Control** tile. If they are successful, then ► 237. Otherwise, they will only be able to stare at the image, and no Activation may be attempted from this tile. Treat this tile as ON.

043. As the team moves ahead, loud screeching noises blast through their helmet radios, even when they turn the radios off. Treat this tile as Impassable until turned OFF. The team is able to pinpoint the radio emissions' source in one of the walls of the chamber; it seems to be aimed at the **Control** tiles in this section. Treat this tile as ON. If it is turned OFF, gain 1 Information Point.

044. The team's investigation causes a bulb at the end of a long tube hanging from the ceiling to explode. If any blue **Power** tile is on, then ► 238. If no blue **Power** is ON in the artifact, then treat this tile as OFF.

045. The team finds unusual heat building up in several crystalline structures that are scattered throughout the chamber. There may be danger here. Treat this tile as ON.

046. Ahead of the team is a large whirling metal spiral with razor-sharp edges. If an Astronaut is present, he has one attempt to roll a **36** or less and then ► 153. Otherwise, the tile is Impassable. Treat this tile as ON.

047. A large, gelatinous mound bulges from the floor ahead. It is filled with delicate shapes that pirouette inside the transparent mound so rapidly their forms cannot be distinguished. Treat this tile as OFF.

048. The team has disrupted the tenuous magnetic field which flickers within the **Control** chamber.This tile shuts OFF and also turns OFF all **Intel** tiles in this section. Only an Engineer will be able to restore the field on one roll of **26** or less. If fixed, treat this tile as ON.

049. *No Information* is gained by the investigation. No radio transmissions are found. Treat this tile as OFF.

050. *No Information* is gained; there is no heat ahead in the chamber. Treat this tile as OFF.

051. The room ahead appears empty. *No Information* is gained. Treat this tile as OFF.

052. The investigating member accidentally shuts down all activity from large spheres that were rotating in the chamber ahead. Treat this tile as Permanently OFF.

053. A large rectangular slab is seen floating in the chamber ahead. There are no apparent means by which the slab is held in place. Treat this tile as ON.

054. There is a blank keyboard on one wall with an empty picture frame above it. However much the team plays with the keyboard, nothing happens. Treat this tile as Permanently OFF.

055. There are extreme levels of hard radiation in the small room ahead. The radiation is definitely dangerous and should be avoided. Treat this tile as ON.

056. A stunning array of varicolored lights, illustrations, diagrams, and holographic displays flash dizzyingly around the walls of the circular chamber. Activation of this tile may only be attempted by an Engineer, and if successful, then ► 239. Treat this tile as ON.

057. *No Information* is available. The area ahead is dark and empty. Treat this tile as OFF.

058. There are no radio transmissions found ahead. *No Information* may be gained. Treat this tile as OFF.

059. The piece of equipment used in the investigation causes a short but intense gravity burst. If it is before day 25, nothing happens. If it is day 25 or later, the investigating equipment is damaged. Treat this tile as ON.

060. Fine spiderweb-like strands line the walls of the chamber. *No Information* of any substance is obtained. Treat this tile as OFF.

061. The team detects a radio beam at a steady 4.6 megahertz coming from a disk-like device with multi-colored lights on its edges. If a Semanticist is present, then ► 240. Treat this tile as OFF.

062. The team stumbled over some projections on the floor. As a result, this tile turns Permanently OFF.

063. There are some infrared emissions from inside an alcove in one of the walls. If the team wishes to investigate what is inside the alcove, then ► 241. Otherwise, nothing happens and continue play. Treat this tile as OFF.

064. *No Information* is available. The chamber is empty. Treat this tile as OFF.

065. An extension from the wall seems to be a control of some kind. If the team wishes to manipulate the control, then ► 070. Otherwise, treat this tile as OFF and continue play.

066. The team finds a small box in the chamber. When they touch it, a three-dimensional sine wave appears. The wave expands to fill the room and rotates, passing through the team. Every damaged piece of equipment is automatically repaired, and the team feels greatly invigorated (add 10 days for further investigation of the artifact). If a Semanticist is with the team, then ► 119; otherwise, the sine wave disappears and the tile turns Permanently OFF.

067. The chamber is covered with a black, nonreflective surface. Treat this tile as OFF.

068. The entire area is filled with a series of blinding flashes of light, causing the team to *lose one day* as they rest and recover their eyesight. If it is beyond day 43, one team member (determined randomly) is incapacitated *unless* there are more than four healthy members present. Treat this tile as ON.

069. The team's investigation causes a brief surge in electrical output from the black walls of the chamber. If more than one **Power** tile is already ON in this section, they and this tile all go OFF. Otherwise, this tile remains ON.

070. Amoeba-like extensions reach out and grab the team. If more than one **Power** tile is ON and no red **Control** tiles are ON and activated in this section, then ► 242. If no more than one **Power** tile is ON in this section and if there is a Semanticist with the team, he has one attempt to roll a **26** or less and ► 162. Otherwise, the extensions soon retract and the team is left unharmed. Treat this tile as OFF.

071. The chamber ahead is a long and tapering cone which contains brightly colored globes floating in it. Treat this tile as OFF.

072. A spinning gyroscope ahead suddenly starts pulsating brightly and spinning rapidly. If a blue **Control** tile is ON *and* a blue **Power** tile ON, then any Scientist present will have one attempt to roll a **26** or less and then ► 205. Otherwise, simply treat this tile as ON.

073. The team sees an off-white chamber completely filled with transparent spheres. When light is played on them, the spheres convulse and attempt to withdraw from the source. Treat this tile as OFF.

074. The chamber ahead emits heavy static which drowns out the team's communication channels. Treat this tile as ON and Impassable until turned OFF. If the tile is turned OFF, gain 1 Information Point.

075. Ahead of the team is a small, translucent sphere on a pedestal with series of malleable controls at the bottom. If an Engineer is with the team, he may subtract **3** from any Activation dice roll. If the tile is activated, then ► 257. Otherwise, simply treat this tile as ON.

076. There is considerable electrical activity within the small spheres in the chamber. If there is a blue **Power** tile ON and a blue **Intel** tile ON in this Section, then ► 243. Treat this tile as OFF.

077. The room ahead contains walls that are transparent vats filled with tiny spheres floating in mists. If a Semanticist is present, he has **6** subtracted from any Activation roll. If the tile is activated, then ► 244. Treat this tile as ON.

078. Nothing is heard on the radio. *No Information* is available. Treat this tile as OFF.

079. Ahead of the team is a hologram showing the artifact in orbit above earth. As one member (determined randomly) approaches the hologram, he is thrust back by a force field, and on a roll of **33** or less, he is incapacitated. If the artifact found in tile #321 is with the team and at least 1 **Control,** 2 **Intel,** and 2 **Power** tiles are on in all three sections, ► 223. Otherwise, treat this tile as ON.

080. The team discovers a circular chain of spheres, rotating around a large pipe set in the floor. The pipe is covered with buttons, each with a different symbol. If a Semanticist and Biologist are present, the tile may be activated. If activated, then ► 245. Otherwise, treat this tile as OFF.

081. By using the infrared device, the team can control the amount of heat within a wire loop ahead. The **Control** tile begins to pulse with heat waves that seem to form a pattern. If a Semanticist is present, ► 151. Otherwise, the pulses stop and the tile will shut down, becoming Permanently OFF.

082. Electrical pulses emitted from a probe, which is surveying the team, indicates a powerful consumption of energy. There may be danger. Another method of investigation may be used if the first attempt was successful. Otherwise, simply treat this tile as ON.

083. A powerful magnetic field is in the chamber ahead, which may prove dangerous to the team's equipment. Treat this tile as ON.

084. The team discovers that a mound in the center of the chamber is electronically active. Treat this tile as ON.

085. The team is seized by the amoeba-like extensions from the walls. All red **Power** tiles in this section are turned ON. Artificial gravity of three G's is created, which now doubles the movement rate of the team (they now expend 2 days instead on 1 as they move). This tile may be

turned OFF from any **Control** tile, eliminating the artificial gravity and making movement normal again. Treat this tile as ON.

086. The team can control the revolution of a large plate on the floor in which smaller disks are placed. As the plate slows, the disks rise and sink in rhythm. As the plate speeds up, the disks sink out of sight and the plate glows softly. A greeting in Old English appears on the plate. Treat this tile as ON. Gain 1 Information Point.

087. The chamber ahead seems to absorb any light cast into it. *No Information* is available. Treat this tile as OFF

088. A tenuous magnetic field is being generated by a dark object in the middle of the chamber. If a Semanticist is present, he will be able to manipulate the field with the magnetometer and may attempt to activate the **Control** tile; if the tile is activated, then ► 246. Otherwise, the **Control** tile cannot be activated. Treat this tile as ON.

089. The team is unable to see anything but a gray lump in the middle of the floor. *No Information* is available. Treat this tile as OFF.

090. There is no magnetic activity ahead. *No Information* may be gained from the investigation. Treat this tile as OFF.

091. A small, glowing plate skims towards the team, and stops in front of them. Every time the team tries to move around it, the plate moves in front of them. They must step on it to enter the chamber. If any red **Intel** plus any red **Power** tiles are on in this section, then ► 247. Otherwise, when the team steps on the plate, the tile turns Permanently OFF and may not be turned on by any Activation attempt.

092. The chamber proves impervious to the tools. *No Information* is available. Treat this tile as OFF.

093. The investigating member stumbles into the whirling spiral in the chamber and is incapacitated. His equipment is also damaged. The spiral blocks passage, making the tile Impassable. Treat the tile as ON.

094. The attempt to monitor radio transmissions causes a turning wheel to stop. Treat this tile as OFF.

095. No radio transmissions are found. *No Information* is gained. Treat this tile as OFF.

096. *No Information* is obtained, except that there appears to be a tube ahead with a bulb at its bottom. Treat this tile as OFF.

097. As the team tries to investigate the chamber, all power in it shuts off and a low rumble is felt throughout the artifact. Treat this tile as Permanently OFF, and any Activation roll from this point on in the game has **5** added to it as a result.

098. There is no radiation ahead. *No Information* is available. Treat this tile as OFF.

099. A wheel is found attached to a thick pole in the center of the chamber; bands of color swirl around the pole. The team may rotate the wheel, which will alter the speed of the rotation of the bands. If the team decides to turn the dial clockwise, then ► 204; if they turn it counterclockwise, then ► 221. Treat this tile as ON.

100. No radiation is detected ahead. *No Information* is gained. Treat this tile as OFF.

101. The chamber ahead is cold. *No Information* is available. Treat this tile as OFF.

102. The team tries cutting one of the many spheres floating in the chamber. This action causes the spheres to congeal together. A reverberation rumbles through the artifact, which can be felt through the team's suits. All green **Power** tiles in this section turn ON, and one of the walls in the chamber dissolves. The team is now able to investigate a new section of the artifact if they wish (gain 2 Information Points). If it is beyond day 30, the team spends *one extra day* in this tile discussing the alternatives before moving on. Treat this tile as ON.

103. If *any green* **Control** tile is ON in the artifact, nothing happens when the team enters the chamber to investigate it. If there is no green **Control** tile ON in this section, then ► 248. Treat this tile as ON.

104. The team's investigation causes an electrical discharge to strike the member with the equipment. If there is no other **Power** tile ON in this section, the member is not hurt. If there is another **Power** tile ON in this section, the investigating member is incapacitated and his equipment is damaged (if electronic). The equipment may be repaired, the member may not. He is incapacitated for the remainder of the game. Treat this tile as ON.

105. The team discovers one of the spheres in the chamber can be manipulated by the ohmmeter. The sphere begins to show news broadcasts from earth. The older broadcasts are difficult to follow and are filled with static; the more recent broadcasts are quite distinct. Treat this tile as ON, and gain 2 Information Points.

106. The chamber ahead gives off dangerous radiation. This tile is Impassable until turned ON. Treat this tile as OFF.

107. The team hears in their helmets a high-pitched whine which quickly passes into the inaudible range. If the radio equipment is with the team, it is damaged (and if it is beyond day 50, it cannot be repaired). The team is not affected otherwise. Treat this tile as ON.

108. There is a highly complicated magnetic field in the chamber ahead. A Semanticist or Physicist must be present and using the magnetometer for the field to be manipulated. If neither scientist is present, the tile may not be activated; if only one of them is present, a **6** is added to the dice roll; if both are present, the Activation attempt may be made normally. If the tile is activated, then ► 249. The tile is ON; if the team leaves the tile without activating it, the tile will shut Permanently OFF.

109. The team detects strong infrared radiation coming from beneath the floor. It may be dangerous. Treat this tile as ON.

110. The team sees a small checkerboard pattern inlaid in the floor. If the team wishes to touch the pattern ► 202. Otherwise, treat this tile as OFF.

111. The team attempts to stop a swinging pendulum in the chamber by brute force but fails. *No Information* is available, and the tile becomes Impassable until it is turned ON. Treat this tile as OFF.

112. A sine-wave appears before the team and sweeps through them. The investigating member's piece of equipment is damaged if electronic; otherwise, no damage is done. Treat the tile as OFF.

113. A floating sphere sprays the team with clear liquid. If a green **Power** tile is ON in the artifact, then ► 141. If no green **Power** tile is ON, the liquid evaporates upon contact and nothing happens. Treat this tile as ON.

114. The tools fit into cubicles surrounding a plate in one wall. If the team decides to place the tools into the holes, then ► 201. Otherwise, continue play and treat this tile as OFF.

115. No electronic instruments or devices are found in the chamber, and *No Information* is available. Treat this tile as OFF.

116. A series of "nuts" and "bolts" on the floor can be manipulated by the team's investigating member. He has two attempts to roll a **25** or less to turn this tile ON. Otherwise, it is Permanently OFF.

117. The team discovers one of the squares in a pattern on the floor ahead controls the energy flowing through the pattern. The energy can only be increased. There may be possible danger. Treat this tile as ON. Gain 1 Information Point.

118. The chamber ahead is a roaring blast furnace of some kind, and this tile is Impassable until turned OFF. Treat this as ON.

119. The Semanticist has one attempt to throw a **35** or less; if he is successful, this tile will remain ON for the rest of the game and any red **Control** tile in this section may automatically be turned ON from this tile (no dice roll is necessary). Gain 2 Information Points. Otherwise, the tile will become Permanently OFF.

120. No radiation is detected and *No Information* is obtained. Treat this tile as OFF.

121. The transparent sphere that is being examined by the team begins to tremble and then explodes, incapacitating the investigating member. If it is beyond day 38, another sphere explodes as well, incapacitating another member (determined randomly). The tile becomes Impassable and is considered Permanently OFF.

122. There is radiation ahead, which increases as the team moves forward. It is not at dangerous levels yet. If the team decides not to enter the tile, treat it as OFF. If they continue to enter the chamber, ► 137.

123. A screen drops in front of the team and begins displaying various symbols. If a Semanticist is present then ► 250. Otherwise, treat the tile as OFF.

124. The investigating team member drops his piece of equipment into a container of clear liquid. The liquid is corrosive, and the equipment becomes damaged, The tile, however, turns ON. If it is beyond day 60 of the exploration, the member also becomes incapacitated when he tries to fish out the equipment.

125. The team's investigation causes gravity surges throughout the artifact and causes the Space Shuttle to become dislodged from the artifact and float free in space. On a roll of **24** or less, it can be automatically guided back into its docking by Mission Control (one attempt only). Otherwise, it is lost and the crew is stranded, unless they can control and maneuver the artifact. Treat this tile as OFF.

126. The team has discovered the controls to a solar collector, which radiates extreme heat. If it is beyond day 50, one team member (determined randomly) is incapacitated; otherwise, the team is unhurt. Treat this tile as ON.

127. The team member punctures the membrane of a gelatinous mound in the chamber. The equipment is damaged, and the tile becomes Impassable as the mound's interior oozes over the floor. Treat this tile as OFF.

128. No radio emissions are detected ahead. *No Information* may be obtained. Treat this tile as OFF.

129. The investigating member bumps one of the black tubes in the room, causing it to break free of its wire support and crash to the floor. The tube shatters, incapacitating the member

and damaging his equipment. If it is beyond day 38, a second team member and his equipment (determined randomly) are also damaged by the shattered tube. In addition, this tile now shuts Permanently OFF and any red **Control** tiles in this section turn Permanently OFF.

130. The team cannot see anything ahead except some small protuberances on the floor. *No Information* may otherwise be gained. Treat this tile as OFF.

131. The floating slab in the chamber emanates an intense force field which repulses the investigating member. If it is beyond day 19, his equipment is damaged; otherwise, he is able to protect his equipment as he falls. Treat this tile as ON.

132. The team causes one of the tanks in the wall of the chamber to crack open. The mists inside dissipate and the tiny spheres evaporate. There is no damage to the team, but the tile now becomes Permanently OFF.

133. No heat is detected ahead. *No Information* is to be gained. Treat this tile as OFF.

134. The team causes a large console in the middle of the chamber to short out. This tile goes OFF, and all **Power** tiles currently ON also shut OFF. This tile must be turned ON before any of the **Power** tiles can be turned ON again; the tile may be turned ON only by a **Control** tile in *another* section which allows such an attempt.

135. *No Information* may be obtained. There is no radiation ahead. Treat this tile as OFF.

136. The bulb at the bottom of a tube in the room responds to radio. The team manages to create an earth-like environ in the room, allowing them to shed their space suits and regenerate their oxygen supply. Add 5 days to the exploration time (may be done only once) and gain 1 Information Point. Treat this tile as ON.

137. As the team enters the chamber, the radiation increases until the tile goes ON. The radiation is still not at dangerous levels. However, if it is beyond day 45, one randomly selected member is incapacitated as he panics and attempts to flee.

138. No radiation ahead. *No Information* is available. Treat this tile as OFF.

139. No activity is found ahead. *No Information* is to be gained. Treat this tile as OFF.

140. A small amount of radiation is present, but otherwise *No Information* is gained. Treat this tile as OFF.

141. If two or more green **Intel** tiles are ON in this section, the liquid cleans the team's suits. Otherwise, it is corrosive and two random team members become incapacitated. If it is beyond day 40, they are killed.

142. As the team moves into the chamber, a brilliant globe of white light envelops them. No harm is done unless one member is already incapacitated, in which case the excitement gives him a mild heart attack. On any future recovery die roll, a **5** or **6** will kill him. Treat the tile as ON.

143. There are barely detectable pulses of radiation ahead. If *any* other **Intel** tiles in this section are ON, ► 216. Otherwise, *No Information* is available and treat this tile as OFF.

144. The investigating member gets his foot entangled in the fine mesh covering the floor. He is not injured, but all red tiles in this section turn OFF immediately. Treat this tile as ON.

145. By first using this **Intel** tile and any blue **Control** tile in this section, the team may gain complete control of the section. A blue **Power** tile must be ON first, and then the team must move to a blue **Control** tile. Once that tile is activated, the team may turn ON all the remaining blue tiles in the section (with or without any other **Power** tiles being turned ON). The section will then be considered ON; as a result, an earth-like environment will be created in the entire artifact (may be done only once). Add **30** days to the team's investigation time limit (also add 30 to any "If it is beyond **x** days..." statements). Gain 5 Information Points.

146. There is a large cube dimly seen in the chamber ahead. *No Information* may be gained. Treat this tile as OFF.

147. The team can control a hologram device that occupies the center of the chamber. Some of the holograms are schematics of the equipment carried by the team. If there is an Astronaut present and the team has simple tools, he may automatically repair any electronic equipment while in this tile; no repair die roll is necessary. Treat this tile as ON, and gain 1 Information Point.

148. There is little heat ahead of the team. *No Information* is available. Treat this tile as OFF.

149. One of the spheres the team examines is a control of some kind. The spheres in the chamber close around the team and hold them *for one extra day*; the spheres seem to be examining the team. The team feels slightly refreshed once they are released. Treat this tile as ON.

150. The team detects fluctuations of heat from electrical equipment ahead. If there are any other **Intel** tiles ON in this section, then this tile is ON; otherwise, treat this tile as OFF.

151. The tile will turn ON as the Semanticist uses the vision equipment to interact with the heat pulses; the **Control** tile appears to respond to a simple binary on-off code. If the green section of the artifact is also ON *at this time,* then this entire section also becomes ON (gain 1 Information Point). Otherwise, the tile will function as a normal **Control** tile.

152. A powerful magnetic field occupies the chamber, making it Impassable until turned OFF. Treat this tile as ON.

153. The Astronaut will discern that the whirling spiral can be turned OFF by going to any **Control** tile and using the Activation procedure.

154. An electrical shock surges through the tools being used as the member investigates a triple helical structure in the chamber. The equipment is damaged and the member incapacitated. The discharges continue in the chamber, making it Impassable until turned OFF. (If an Astronaut is present, he has one attempt to roll a **24** or less to stop the discharges and turn the tile OFF.) Treat this tile as ON.

155. The team is able to open a floating cube in the chamber. The inside of the cube is filled with dials and buttons which control the cube. Any Scientist may now attempt to turn ON this tile by rolling a **23** or less (one attempt only). If he does turn it ON, he may either ►203 or else try to roll a **36** or less (one attempt) to ►192. Otherwise, treat this tile as OFF.

156. By pushing buttons on the wall, a large, bulbous sphere appears before the team. It is soft to the touch and molds itself to the toucher's probing. Treat this tile as OFF.

157. No magnetism is detected in the area ahead. *No Information* is obtained. Treat this tile as OFF.

158. The mesh over the floor ahead is emitting infrared energy, according to the team's instruments. The team may elect to avoid contact with the mesh, in which case treat this tile as OFF. If the team decides to touch the mesh, ► 144.

159. A blinding flash of light is set off which incapacitates the investigating member. The tile is turned Permanently OFF. If any green **Control** or **Intel** tiles are ON in the artifact, they turn OFF as well. If it is beyond day 60, another member (determined randomly) is incapacitated unless there are more than 3 incapacitated members present.

160. The Astronomer realizes that they are looking at a miniature solar system. He classifies the star as an M7 and determines that only the first planet of the system is able to support a carbon-based form of life.

161. There is a small amount of radiation ahead, but not a dangerous amount. Treat this tile as OFF.

162. The Semanticist notices markings within the extension, which upon closer examination are recognized as Old English. It turns out to be a command that, when spoken aloud over the radio, causes the extensions to release the team. Treat this tile as ON, and gain 2 Information Points.

163. *No Information* is available; no electrical energy is detected ahead of the team. Treat this tile as OFF.

164. The radio activates the keyboard. If any green **Power** tiles and green **Intel** tiles are ON in this section, and an Engineer *and* Semanticist are present, then ► 252. Otherwise, treat this tile as OFF

165. *No Information* is obtained other than that there is heavy static ahead. It may mean possible danger. Treat this tile as OFF.

166. The floor ahead is covered by colored tiles, forming a beautiful mosaic. Bright light is emitted from the white tiles, while the colored tiles throb dimly. Treat this tile as ON.

167. A slowly revolving cylinder with sharp protuberances fills the chamber ahead; it releases a sharp electromagnetic pulse at the investigating member, which damages his equipment if electronic. This tile is Impassable until turned OFF. Treat this tile as ON.

168. The room ahead seems to absorb radio waves, but does not emit in any return. *No Information* is obtained. Treat this tile as OFF.

169. The team discovers a transparent model of the artifact ahead, mounted on a high pedestal that is inset with buttons. When buttons are pressed, different rooms or systems within the artifact light up, giving a three-dimensional schematic and map of the artifact. The team now subtracts **6** from all future dice rolls when searching for Accessways. Gain 4 Information Points. Treat this tile as ON.

170. The investigation causes a triple helix in the chamber to stop rotating; a burst of radiation hits the investigating member. If any other **Power** tiles are ON and fewer than two **Intel** tiles are ON in this section, then the investigating member takes radiation damage and is incapacitated. This tile is Impassable until turned OFF. Treat this tile as ON.

171. The team starts a checkerboard pattern on the floor pulsating brightly. Any red **Power** tile in the artifact which is OFF automatically turns ON. Treat this tile as ON.

172. There is a powerful magnetic field arising from a sphere ahead; the field grows stronger as the team approaches until it becomes dangerous. This tile is Impassable until turned OFF. Treat this tile as ON.

173. The strange, multicolored pattern on the floor ahead indicates much electrical activity in the chamber. It cannot be controlled by the team. Treat this tile as OFF.

174. There is a small amount of infrared radiation in the chamber ahead. If any green **Power** tiles are ON, any Activation dice roll is decreased by **10**. Otherwise, there is no effect. Treat this tile as OFF.

175. The spheres floating in the chamber ahead give off a small amount of radiation. The team may move ahead with no interference. Treat this tile as OFF.

176. Magnetic readings are nil. *No Information* of any kind is available. Treat this tile as OFF.

177. Short bursts of radiation are detected ahead, but not enough to harm the team. Treat this tile as OFF.

178. There is a slowly revolving cylinder filling the chamber ahead. The tile is Impassable until turned OFF. Treat this tile as ON.

179. No infrared radiation ahead. *No Information* is available. Treat this tile as OFF.

180. There is no electrical activity in the glowing wall ahead. *No Information* of any kind is gained. Treat this tile as OFF.

181. The tile is Impassable due to a large, tiered structure that resembles a water wheel, which fills up the chamber; the structure is slowly rotating. The tile must be turned OFF before it can be crossed. Treat this tile as ON.

182. The tools have no effect on anything in the chamber. *No Information* is available. Treat this tile as OFF.

183. No magnetism is detected ahead. *No Information* is available. Treat this tile as OFF.

184. Protuberances on the floor ahead seem to be electrical controls. If a Physicist is presently with the team, ► 218. Treat this tile as ON.

185. Several pipes ahead of the team are found to be electrical conduits. If any red **Power** tile in this section is ON, this tile is ON. Otherwise, this tile is OFF and *cannot* be turned ON unless a red **Power** tile is ON beforehand.

186. A large, bulbous sphere in front of the team responds to the magnetometer. The team is able to control the shape of the sphere and its ability to float. Treat this tile as ON. Gain 1 Information Point.

187. At the bottom of a vat of liquid in the chamber are electrical controls. The team cannot reach them since the liquid is highly corrosive. Treat this tile as OFF.

188. There is no magnetism ahead. *No Information* is to be gained. Treat this tile as OFF.

189. There is nothing in the chamber for the tools to affect. *No Information* may be obtained. Treat this tile as OFF.

190. There is a slight amount of electricity detected in the chamber ahead of the team. *No Information* is available. Treat this tile as ON.

191. There is some electrical activity coming from a large sphere in the middle of the chamber. Treat this tile as ON.

192. The team discovers that one of the dials in the cube is actually a long tube which may be removed. If an Astronaut is present, then ► 213. Otherwise, the object is inert.

193. A force field damages the investigating member's equipment (if electronic). Whenever the team passes through this tile, another piece of electronic equipment (determined randomly) will also be damaged. Treat this tile as ON.

194. Ahead of the team is a rapidly spinning gyroscope, giving off an occasional burst of light from its top. Treat this tile as ON.

195. A huge, swinging pendulum fills the chamber ahead. As the team approaches it, the pendulum speeds up. *No Information* is to be gained. This tile is Impassable until turned OFF. Treat this tile as ON.

196. A large sphere occupies the center of the area ahead and gives off brilliant pulses of light. If the team wishes to investigate the sphere, choose one member at random and ► 215. Otherwise, the team may simply go around the sphere. Treat this tile as ON.

197. The chamber ahead of the team is cold and gives off no infrared radiation. *No Information* can be gained. Treat this tile as OFF.

198. The team discovers a large triple helix that is composed of millions of tiny spheres. The team spends *two additional days* studying the helix, but *No Information* is gained. Treat this tile as OFF.

199. There is a row of keys on a console in the center of the chamber; each key has a different symbol on it. If a Semanticist is present with the team and they wish to turn some of the keys, then ► 254. Otherwise, continue play and treat this tile as OFF.

200. There is no electrical activity to be found ahead. *No Information* may be gained. Treat this tile as OFF.

201. If the Semanticist is with the team, he may place the tools in various niches. He has one attempt to roll a **23** or less. If he succeeds, treat this tile as ON and ► 214 (the tools *must* be left in this tile). If he fails, treat this tile as Permanently OFF.

202. If any red **Power** tile is ON in this section, the checkerboard pattern gives off an electrical discharge. If it is before day 25, the investigating member is not hurt; if it is day 25 or later, the member is incapacitated (he has one chance to throw a **25** or less to recover immediately). If incapacitated, he will remain that way for the remainder of the game (he has no chance to recover from his injury, but he will not die from it either; if incapacitated by another method, he may die from that damage instead). Treat this tile as ON.

203. Any Scientist may attempt to alter the ON/OFF status of any **Intel** tile in the artifact from this tile. On a roll of **16** or less, the ON/OFF status of the **Intel** tiles may be changed (one attempt only may be made for each tile).

204. The color bands slow down as the wheel is turned. The tile shuts OFF, and one green or blue **Power** tile that is ON also shuts OFF (determine randomly which tile goes OFF). The tile may be turned ON from any **Control** tile, and if this happens, then ► 253.

205. If there are a Semanticist *and* a Biologist with the team, they will be able to translate the pulses as a binary code and ► 217. Otherwise, the pulses are meaningless and continue play.

206. The chamber ahead is filled with a transparent globe. Inside the globe is a smaller, glowing, red sphere being circled by seven smaller dark spheres, all revolving on the same plane around the red sphere. If there is an Astronomer present, ► 160. Treat this tile as ON.

207. The team sees a computer keyboard under a screen on a wall; it has symbols which are found to be Old English letters. Nothing happens when the team plays with the keyboard. *No Information* is gained. Treat this tile as OFF.

208. A computer keyboard on the wall of the chamber emits a narrowband radio transmission to all other red tiles in the artifact. If there is a Semanticist in the team, ► 212. Otherwise, treat this tile as ON.

209. *No Information* is available on the infrared spectrum. Treat this tile as OFF.

210. The team's investigation of a computer keyboard shuts this tile Permanently OFF.

211. The team's investigation has caused a large transparent sphere ahead to become opaque. Treat this tile as OFF.

212. The Semanticist can use the radio to transmit Old English commands to the computer by binary code. Any *red* tile in the entire artifact may have its ON/OFF status altered from this tile. No Activation dice roll is necessary.

213. The Astronaut discovers that the device is a teleporter. On a roll of **26** or less, the team can move instantly to any other ON tile in the same section. The teleporter may be carried with the team and used on any ON tile to move to another ON tile (if doubles are rolled when using the teleporter, a day is used up). Gain 2 Information Points

214. The tanks begin to form pictures, showing the earth and giving a set of binary numbers next to it. A second picture of a planet circling a red star is next shown with another set of binary numbers. The team realizes that these are coordinates which locate the earth and the other planet in relation to each other. The other planet is discovered to be 75 light-years away in the direction of the Grus constellation. Gain 2 Information Points.

215. The light pulses change to hard radiation. If it is beyond 30 days, the member is incapacitated by radiation. Otherwise, the radiation was detected and avoided. Treat this tile as ON.

216. If there is a Biologist with the team, ► 255. Otherwise, *No Information* is available and treat this tile as OFF.

217. By repeating the code back at the gyroscope, the team has gained control of its rotation. When it is slowed down, it projects a picture on the ceiling of the chamber. There appears an alien being who is insectoid in shape. Its abdomen is supported by three spindly legs, while the thorax is almost upright. It has large tufts of hair growing from its joints; its body is protected by a chitinous carapace. A series of pictures show great cities covering a planet beneath a ruddy sun. The technology of the race is obviously much more highly advanced than human technology. At the end of the pictures, a greeting and a wish for peace appear in Old English letters.

218. The Physicist realizes he can create an instantaneous wormhole through space, which may be used for sending messages by radiowave. Gain 3 Information Points. If an Astronomer is present, ► 222.

219. The investigation causes a metal object in the middle of the room to explode, incapacitating the investigating member and damaging his equipment. If it is beyond day 50, another member (determined randomly) suffers the same damage to himself and his equipment.

220. There is terrific static ahead of the team, and there may be danger. If it is beyond day 40, the team spends *an extra day* here discussing the possibilities. Treat this tile as OFF.

221. The color bands increase in speed. If any blue **Power** tile is ON, the team will be able to turn ON one green **Power** tile (determined randomly) in this section, and then ► 256.

222. The Astronomer discovers the transmission will be directed towards the Grus constellation. Gain 3 more Information Points.

223. The robot moves into the hologram and returns with a small cassette. The team may insert the cassette in a compartment in the robot's chest. If they decide to do so, then ► 251. Otherwise, the robot replaces the cassette in the hologram, and continue play.

224. The opening is discovered to be a portal to another section of the artifact and may now be explored if the team so wishes.

225. When the team sits in the chairs, the walls of the alcove light up and display the following sequence: first, the artifact is seen leaving a planet near a dim, red star and moving far out into space; a little later, a small probe is seen shooting out of the artifact towards a distant star; the probe zooms in towards a planet which looks habitable; alien transmissions are seen, primarily news broadcasts; the artifact is seen moving into orbit around the planet and a team of aliens approaches to explore the artifact; after the artifact has been explored by several teams, it moves out of the solar system and back into space. This sequence is shown several times, as a number of solar systems are visited. The last sequence shows broadcasts from earth and the team making their way through the artifact. The team *loses one day* watching the pictures. Gain 5 Information Points (if the team has a recording device, gain 15 Information Points instead). Treat this tile as ON.

226. The symbols on the dials are a periodic table of the elements. Gain 2 Information Points.

227. The tile turns ON; the artifact may be maneuvered from this tile by an Astronaut. Gain 3 Information Points.

228. The Astronaut gets two attempts to roll a **26** or less to repair the damage and turn the tile ON. Gain 1 Information Point if repaired. The team realizes the chamber is part of an immense solar collector.

229. The robot will now follow the team and will respond to verbal commands. Subtract **3** from all future investigation rolls. The robot also helps with attempts to activate or turn ON all **Control** tiles, and to turn ON *any* tile when it is present with the team on the tile to be turned ON or activated. The team must roll a **34** or less to turn ON or activate the tile. Gain 5 Information Points.

230. The first team member (determined randomly) to sit down is incapacitated by an electrical shock. Treat this tile as OFF.

231. The team discovers that the chirps make up an alien language, which can be translated when they return to earth. Gain 5 more Information Points.

232. Artificial gravity has been created within the ship. Roll one die; the result is now the number of days it will take the team to move from one tile to another. The gravity will be cancelled if the tile is turned OFF. Treat this tile as ON.

233. Any damaged piece of equipment may now be repaired by placing it in the alcove. On a roll of **1** or **2,** the equipment will be repaired. The team may return to this tile in the future and attempt to fix other damaged equipment by using the same method.

234. The tile is turned ON. The team discovers that three of the black tubes contain anti-matter and that the fourth tube is creating more anti-matter. Gain 2 Information Points.

235. The team discovers a small, triangular artifact within the niche. When tested, it is found to open any closed Accessway. The access control may be carried with the team.

236. By interrupting the electric eye, a sine-wave forms in front of the team and begins to rotate. The wave passes through the team members. This results in one blue **Power** tile (determined randomly) turning ON.

237. The team is able to activate the **Control** tile and use it. The symbols also begin to form simple pictures of common objects; the name of the object is printed in Old English and in an alien script. Gain 2 Information Points.

238. The investigating member is incapacitated by a burst of heat from the broken bulb. Treat this tile as ON and Impassable until turned OFF.

239. Among the displays are schematics of a control device, which is found under a panel in the floor. The team removes the control and learns that they are now able to turn any tile in the entire artifact ON or OFF. Also, when activated, this **Control** tile will allow the team to control and maneuver the artifact if tiles #112 and #121 are also ON and activated.

240. The frequency may be controlled by the radio. The team will be able to turn any **Intel** tile in the entire artifact ON or OFF from this tile.

241. Inside the alcove is a small, flat disk. When it is touched, it translates information directly to the brain of the team member. It is a telepathic textbook of scientific and mathematical information. Gain 3 Information Points.

242. The extensions reach out and grab the team members. They are held for *two days* as the extensions examine them. While being held, they notice that inside the extensions are articulated skeletons that seem to be shaped like a three-fingered hand. The team is released unharmed. Gain 1 Information Point.

243. One of the spheres can be detached from the rest. The tile then turns ON. The team can use the sphere to turn ON *any* blue tile in this section, but only when the team is present on this tile.

244. As the team approaches the walls, the mists show pictures of news broadcasts from earth. The launch of the Space Shuttle *Discovery* is shown, as well as the approach of the Shuttle to the artifact. The pictures stop at the point where the team entered the artifact. Gain 1 Information Point.

245. If the team removes one of the spheres from the device and if they can activate the tile, the sphere will create a force field around them in which an earth-like environment is generated. Add 5 days to the investigation time limit. This device need not be used immediately, but may be carried with the team and used later. If the team does not use the device, it may be brought back with them to earth (and gain 3 Information Points). If the tile is *not* activated, the device remains inert and may not be used at all (no Information Points are available).

246. Once it has been activated, this tile can be used to turn ON any tile of the same color within this section by rolling less than or equal to the Activation number.

247. When the member steps on the plate, he receives a mild shock which acts like a stimulant. The other team members also receive the stimulant by stepping on the plate. Their movement rate is now doubled (they must roll doubles twice before a day is expended). Treat this tile as ON.

248. The member who first enters the chamber receives an electrical shock and becomes incapacitated. This tile will remain ON until turned OFF and will incapacitate another member (determined randomly) each time the team enters it.

249. A section of the floor slides open and allows the team to enter a new section of the artifact. Gain 2 Information Points.

250. The symbols can be interpreted as Old English, which the Semanticist will be able to read. He is thus able to activate the tile. If activated, treat this tile as ON.

251. The robot's memory is now fully loaded and it will be able to speak Old English to the team. After a few minutes of speech, the robot learns to speak modern English. If the team brings the robot to any **Control** tile in a section and if a Semanticist and Physicist are present, they may activate the tile (they may use the robot's Activation assistance); the team will now be able to turn ON the entire section from the activated **Control** tile. If the team has two sections of the artifact turned ON and if they return with the robot to tile #321 (where the robot was found) while a Semanticist, Astronaut and Engineer are present, they main gain control of the artifact. If the team contains a Semanticist, Astronaut, Engineer and Astronomer and if two sections are ON *plus* all the red **Power** and **Intel** tiles ON in the third section, they may maneuver the artifact from tile #321.

252. The tile is ON and can now be activated. Any **Control** tile in the artifact may be turned ON from this tile. This tile may also be investigated again by using a different piece of equipment. Treat this tile as ON.

253. The team will be able to control the artifact from this tile if tiles #112, #121, and #231 are all activated.

254. If any green **Intel** tile is ON and any two green **Power** tiles are ON in this section, the **Control** tile (#121) is also ON. If tiles #112 and #231 are ON and if an Astronaut, Astronomer amd Semanticist are present, the team has gained control of the artifact. If this tile is ON and if the other two sections of the artifact are also ON, the team may maneuver the artifact as well (the same three team members must still be present).

255. The Biologist will be able to determine that the gyroscope has a chitinous surface similar to that covering terrestrial insects. It is made of living tissue and seems to be drawing sustenance from the energy coursing through the chamber. Gain 1 Information Point.

256. Once this tile is ON, the artifact may be maneuvered from it if tiles #112, #121 and #231 are also ON.

257. If the tile is activated, images of the team moving through the artifact are seen. The team may return to this tile and on each successful Activation roll, check to see what happened to them on any other tile (they may read the Information Message for that tile). Gain 1 Information Point. Treat this tile as ON.

258. Inside the alcove are several containers with solids and liquids in them. The team will be able to recognize these materials as organic and made of the same amino acids as in humans. Gain 1 Information Point.

Mission Sheet

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Trip #: **Number of Days Available for Mission:** **Number of Members Present on Mission:**

MEMBER/EQUIPMENT CARRIED

Member	*Equipment*	*Member*	*Equipment*
Member	*Equipment*	*Member*	*Equipment*
Member	*Equipment*	*Member*	*Equipment*

DAYS REMAINING ON MISSION

Note: Once the player has determined the number of days that will be allotted for the investigation of the artifact on this trip, he should count off a number of boxes equal to the days (each row of boxes contains 25). The rest of the boxes should then be crossed out. As the team explores the artifact and days are used up, cross off one box for each day expended. Once all the boxes are crossed off, the game ends. It is suggested that the player use a pencil when crossing off boxes, since extra days may be added to the investigation as a result of the Information Messages.

INFORMATION POINTS

NO INFORMATION TILE NUMBERS

ALIEN ARTIFACTS DISCOVERED

NOTES

UNIVERSE Commlink

A Regular Feature for *Universe*™ Players

by John Butterfield

(**Ed. Note:** The *Universe* game supplement, *First Contacts,* mentioned in this column is scheduled to be published by TSR in the spring of 1983. Further in the future will be a 64-page adventure trilogy, designed by Nick Karp, David Spangler, Greg Gerold and Bob Kern. David's piece is especially interesting in that it is designed for use by any number of players *without* a GM; the players refer to paragraphs and tables in the rules to determine encounters and their outcomes.)

One question asked by many *Universe* game players was succinctly posed in a letter. **Tim Osborne** writes: I'm having a real problem understanding the logic behind the Character Heritage Table. If a Potential Multiplier of 4 is exceptional, then why is the sum of Potential Multipliers of 12 or more only given 2 Study Points instead of 6? It would seem that a person that had a higher intellect, social background, etc., would get more, not less, Study Points...Should not the Study Points be reversed so that 12 or more Potential Multiplier points equals 6 and 4 or less equals 2?

This anomaly struck many people as odd. The reason I designed Potentials and Study Points this way is to create a balance between characters. A character with low Potentials and lots of Study Points will end up with many average characteristics and familiarity with many skills. A character with high Potentials and few Study Points will receive a few very high characteristics and expertise in a few skills. The rationale of Tim's argument makes sense, but if I did it his way, good characters would be determined by their Potential rolls and not by player decision. My rationale is that a youth showing potential in a specific area will be directed toward studies in that area at the expense of other fields.

I have received some letters and have seen a few reviews complaining about the fact that skills made available to a character through his fields of study may only be taken with initial Skill Points. Wrong! Step 12 of the Character Generation Sequence and Case 7.6 state that a character may expend Professional Skill Points to gain or improve skills listed in his fields of study, in addition to those listed under his profession. Furthermore, he is considered *familiar* with *all* those skills (each such skill is marked with an **X** on the Character Record.

The *First Contacts* supplement will contain a number of new professions and skills for characters in the game. The most important of these is *Perception,* a skill that every character and NPC possesses. I recommend the immediate addition of this skill to all character records.

PERCEPTION

9 Levels/No Characteristic Limit

Perception is a measure of the character's intuition developed as a result of his adventuring experience. It is used during play to determine if a character notices a detail about a situation, sees something in the distance, hears a footfall, etc.

Every character automatically possesses the Perception skill when generated. All human characters initially possess this skill at level 2. No initial Skill Points or Professional Skill Points need be spent to acquire the skill, nor may the skill be improved by expenditure of such points. Perception may be improved during play by amassing Perception Experience Points. Perception is used in play in either of two ways:

1. If the GM wishes to allow the character a chance to notice something not readily apparent that is related purely to the senses (sight, hearing, smell, etc.), he instructs the character to conduct a *Perception Check* by rolling *one* die. If the die result is equal to or less than the character's Perception level, the GM informs him of the occurrence or item. If the die result is greater than the character's Perception level, the GM does not provide any information.

2. If the GM wishes to allow a character a chance to notice something related to a particular area of expertise, he instructs the character to conduct a Perception Check by rolling *percentile dice*. The chance of success equals 10% *plus* the character's Perception level *plus* the level he has with the skill associated with the item or event. The *higher* of these two levels is *squared before adding.* **Example:** A skimmer is flying by the character at the edge of view. He has Perception 3 and Air Vehicles 5, so he has a 38% chance ($10 + 5^2 + 3$) of noticing the vehicle and correctly identifying it as a skimmer. Any one of many different skills may be associated with a Perception Check; the most common would be a scientific, technical, environ, or vehicle skill. However, any skill might apply, depending on the situation.

A character who rolls a one on either die when conducting a Perception Check receives one Perception Experience Point.

Universe NPC Record

The *Universe* Character Record was designed for continued use by a player with an evolving character. As a GM, however, I desire a more compact form for keeping records of Non-Player Characters. Inspired by Gerry Klug's NPC cards for the *DragonQuest*™ game (see *Ares* magazine number 11), I now use a similar card system for the NPC's in the *Universe* game. The example printed on this page can be reproduced on 3"×5" index cards (on the unlined side). The cards can be kept in a file for easy reference. On the back of each card, I include notes about the NPC's location (especially if he is the owner of a store, service, or spaceship) and his history and goals, as applicable to my campaign.

All characteristics are abbreviated as on the Character Record. (**Key: ST** is Strength; **EN** is Endurance; **DX** is Dexterity; **AY** is Agility; **IN** is Intelligence; **MP** is Mental Power; **LD** is Leadership; **EM** is Empathy; **AG** is Aggression. Modifications to the first four Physical Characteristics are written to the right of the slash. The other characteristics are self-evident.) To save room on the card, only the Environ and Gravity type with the highest skill levels are listed. All other levels would be extrapolated from these if the NPC wandered from his environ (see 5.4 of the Gamemaster's Guide). Note that the new Perception skill is included. If the NPC has many skills, I use the back of the card to list the excess.■■

Name_____ Profession_____

Age_____ Sex_____ Soc. Standing_____

ST___/___ EN___/___ DX___/___ AY___/___ IN_____ MP_____

LD_____ EM_____ AG_____ Perception_____ Temp_____ Urban_____

Home Environ_____ Level_____ Gravity_____ Level_____

Skills (Level)	Money and Possessions

TSR grants permission to reproduce this card for personal use.

Questing

A Regular Feature for *DragonQuest*™ Players

by Gerry Klug

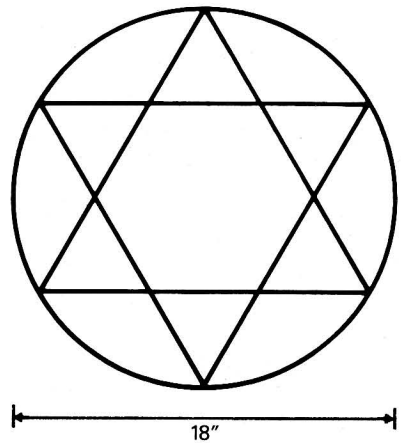
It has come to my attention of late that many of you are having a little difficulty concerning the College of Greater Summoning. Either the GM's aren't able to adequately balance and integrate it in their campaigns, or they really don't have any concrete idea what the demons, succubi, etc., do while on this plane or why they appear here. When these questions were put to me originally, I had a difficult time answering them to the players' satisfaction due to my own inexperience with the college. In my campaign, not very many players (0, to be exact) have chosen that college for fear of what could happen. I used the college as a great source of NPC's (Loklar and Daghan from *The Palace of Ontoncle* are still running around my world), but I never had a player nagging me to come up with a ruling about this Ritual or that Demon, so I never researched the college in depth as I should have.

Well, your inquiries have prompted my curiosity to go to the original source materials and examine where this college came from and how the source material became altered into the form we find now. What I discovered surprised me quite a bit.

But first, I will attempt to answer the specific questions which have been posed to me and include in the answers some of the information I have discovered.

One of the first questions which arose was what Triangle is being spoken about in the paragraph immediately below the diagram of the Circle of Protection and the Pentacle? It says, "the summoned entity is forced into the *Triangle* (outside the Circle of Protection)." What Triangle? None is mentioned in the text above the diagram, and the diagram itself certainly shows no triangle. What was omitted was the description of a Triangle which is drawn beyond the Circle at the compass point which relates to the source of the Demon being summoned (this will be explained later in this article).

The other question, which is related, concerns the reference to a "Hexagram" on the bottom of page 65 (*DragonQuest* Second Edition) under the list of items which these adepts receive after they are trained. A *Hexagram* is a symbol drawn on a parchment of calf's skin, covered with a cloth of fine white linen, and draped from the girdle of lion's skin outside the white robe worn by a Greater Summoner. It helps cause the demon to take physical form and compels them to be obedient.



Next, as opposed to what is implied in 47.2, an Adept of Greater Summoning *cannot* achieve rank with counterspells. Only a Namer may achieve rank with counterspells. Counterspells, as they relate to the College of Greater Summoning, are used as a form of banishment. When a General Knowledge Counterspell is cast over an Imp, Devil, Succubi, Incubi, or Hero *by the Adept who either was granted the companion or summoned the entity,* that entity or companion is banished back to the dimension from whence it came. A counterspell cast by anyone else will have no effect whatsoever. If a Special Knowledge Counterpsell is cast over a Summoned Demon by *anyone,* that Demon is banished back to the plane from whence it came. Thus Namers become important individuals in the control of the demon world on this plane. It should be emphasized here that counterspells can only be *passively* resisted, and it is up to the GM to decide which Demons, once summoned to this plane, will resist being sent back.

In reference to Imps and Devils, the 7% Base Chance of knowing past, present and future events represents the chance they will know the correct answer to a specific question posed to them. It is up to the GM to perform the roll and decide what their answer (if any) will be if the result is above the Base Chance.

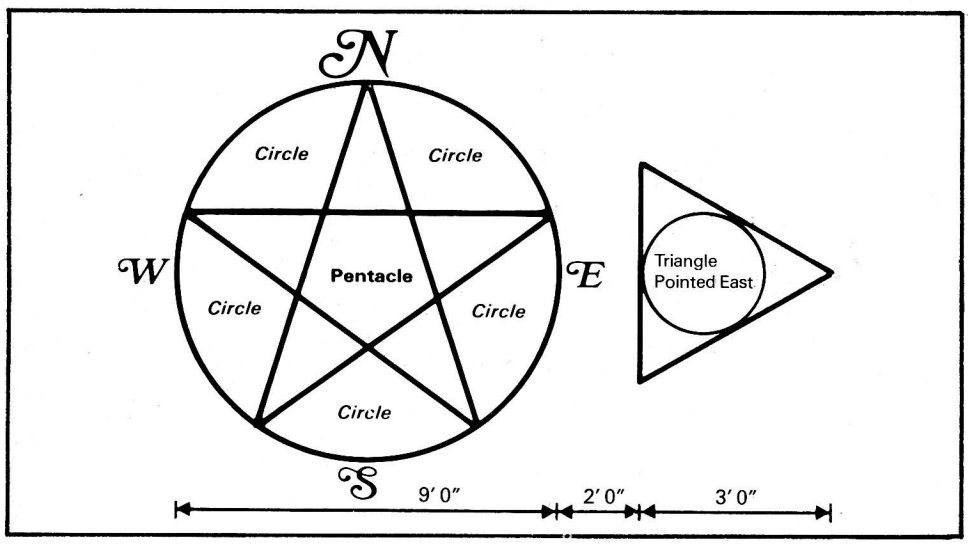
The Ritual of Summoning Succubi (and Incubi) has caused problems in two areas: first, it is possible without much difficulty to raise the chance to summon one of these creatures to 99%, thus making it almost foolproof; second, some players and GM's are not aware of the background of these creatures and are not sure how they should be played. To answer both of these problems, the following paragraph should be substituted for the first paragraph in Q-2, Ritual of Summoning Succubi:

Q-2 Ritual of Summoning Succubi

This ritual may be used to summon one or more Succubi, who will arrive on this plane favorably disposed towards the summoner for having summoned them, and thus will not immediately need to be bound. Succubi arrive on this plane with only one goal: the enticement and mating with humans. Any deed the summoner desires of them which will further their goal will be approved and encouraged by the Succubi. If the Succubi are summoned to perform a task not immediately related to their goal, they will have to be Bound and forced to do the task. The Base Chance is 5% (+3 per Rank), and it is reduced by 10 for each Succubi above one being summoned at once. If the ritual backfires, the Succubi will appear and attempt to molest and then devour the summoner and his or her companions.

It is important to understand why Incubi and Succubi appear on this plane at all in order to successfully GM them in a campaign. They are not intended to be the "companions" of any Adept. Their sole purpose is to increase the number of followers of the Powers of Darkness on this plane. They are representatives of this Power, and as such, they cannot by themselves create anything. Thus, they must use mankind (members of both sexes to aid in their mission. By their sexual activity, they seek to create children who are, in reality and spirit, children of Darkness. Thus, an adept who can provide them with a mating can gain their temporary aid. **Note:**

(continued on page 39)



RP Gaming

Thieves' World™

Design: Lynn Abbey, Yurek Chodak, Steve Marsh, Midkemia Press, Steve Perrin, Greg Stafford Chaosium, Inc.

Additional Materials: Dave Arneson, Eric Goldberg, Wes Ives, Rudy Kraft, Marc Miller, Mary Beth Miller, Victoria Poyser, Lawrence Shick, Richard Snider, Ken St. Andre, Lynn Willis; Poul Anderson, Robert Asprin, Andrew Offutt

Components: One 64-page Game Master's Guide; one 64-page Personalities of Sanctuary book; two 20-page Players' Guides; one 22"x34" map; two 11"x17" maps, Chaosium, Inc., $16.00

Reviewed by Steve List

The first fantasy role-playing games were basically dungeon oriented, and required a GM to prepare the dungeon in which the adventures would occur. Soon developed a secondary type of publication, the pre-generated dungeon. As FRP games became more sophisticated, so too did the scenarios and supplements created to support them. But with few exceptions, each was created for use with only one set of game rules. Some supplements were published in which the conditions and characters were so vague that they could be used with just about any game, but this left the job of "customizing" the adventure to the GM all over again.

Thieves' World moves in a new direction. As a literary work, Robert Lynn Asprin's *Thieves' World* (and its companion volume *Tales from the Vulgar Unicorn*) was a collection of stories by various authors set in the city of Sanctuary, in a world unspecified. Both the setting and the characters were eminently suitable for a role-playing situation, so Chaosium has incorporated them into what is billed as a "complete adventure pack." The claim may be a tad exaggerated, for despite the wealth of material there are no complete scenarios per se; there are, however, ten "scenario ideas," extensive encounter tables, and manifold hints and suggestions for would-be Game Masters.

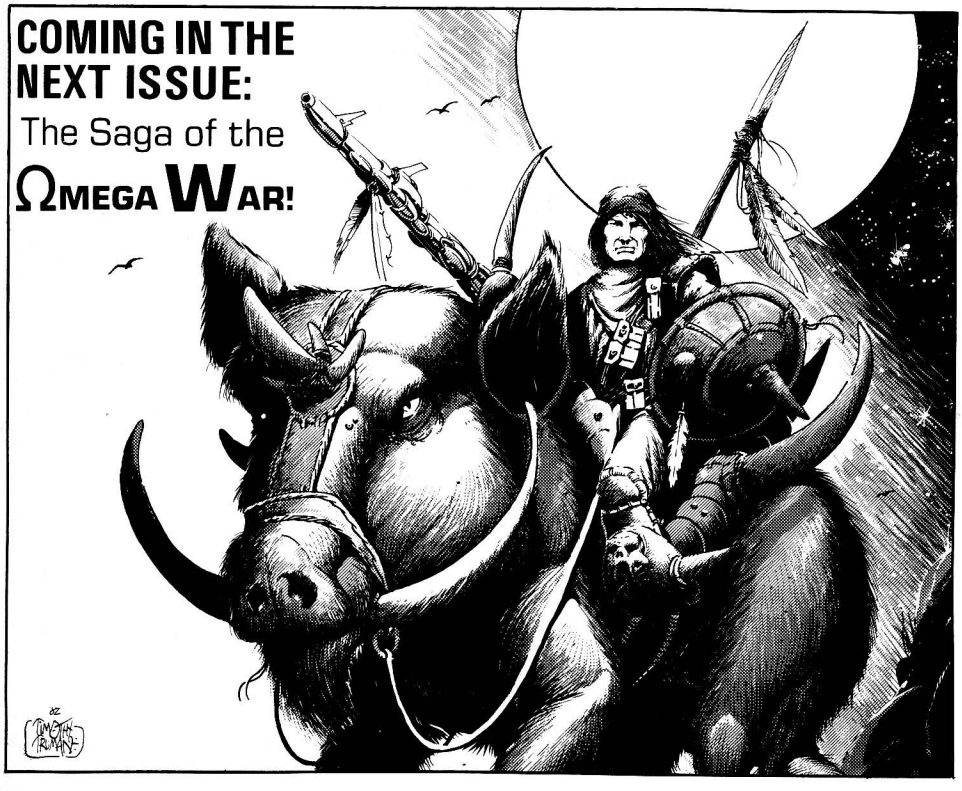
Thieves' World is not one of the vague-enough-to-be-universal types of work. It is not usable with every role-playing game, but has been customized for nine of them (the *Dungeons & Dragons®, Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®, DragonQuest™, Adventures in Fantasy™, Chivalry & Sorcery™, The Fantasy Trip™, RuneQuest™, Traveller™,* and *Tunnels and Trolls™* games). This adaptability has been accomplished in the Personalities of Sanctuary book by having people well-versed in the game involved (in five instances, the original designers of the games) provide the NPC stats and in most cases an essay reconciling the rules of the games with the world of Sanctuary.

To a large extent the explanations deal with magic. In general, an FRP game has a single system of magic, one that is distinct from those of other games. The two *Thieves' World* anthologies have as many different magic systems as there are magicians, as each was created by a different author. Even the prevalence of magic is hard to reconcile, ranging as it does from games like *Traveller* in which there is no magic (the sophistry which rationalizes this problem makes for interesting reading) to *RuneQuest*, in which anyone with a few points of Power and the price of a spell can perform it.

Players who require fastidious consistency may be annoyed by a feature of this approach. The various people who prepared the NPC stats listed the characters they thought best. Therefore, each has a different list, and while many major characters will be on everybody's list, some will be missing here and there. Those that are on many lists will be differently perceived. For example, Prince Kadakithis appears in the *D&D™* game section as a ninth-level fighter but in the *C&S* section as only a level three non-fighter. Others may not vary so widely, but the phenomenon of differing perceptions led Eric Goldberg to provide the *DragonQuest* game stats with ranges of attribute values so individual GM's could use values they liked that were still "official."

Of the few drawbacks little can be said. As noted, there are no ready-to-play scenarios presented, but plenty of ingredients for a competent GM to use in conducting a superior one by himself. The exigencies of forcing the various magic systems to fit the constraints of the stories may be an annoying inconvenience in some circumstances. Each user will have to decide for himself if Sanctuary exists in his universe. If it does, there is the problem of how to more fully integrate it and make the inhabitants consistent with the previously defined portions. If it does not, the GM must decide by what means (inter-dimensional portals? space travel?) the player characters arrive there. Some gamers may be disappointed that their favorite FRPG is not covered in *Thieves' World*. Just as there are to be more anthologies about the city of Sanctuary, so Chaosium hopes to update the game with new systems in the future.

In summary, *Thieves' World* is not a work that allows a GM to spend merely a few hours reading it, nor does it present a campaign that will be exhausted in a few playings. It does provide a vehicle with which a GM willing to devote the time can create an entire city which should never grow stale no matter how many times it it visited.■■



QUESTING *(continued from page 38)*

Because of their purpose, an Incubi will never kill the human he (?) has just mated with. He will endeavor to keep the nature of his true being from this woman so the child which he is trying to create will be born and not aborted. It is to be assumed that any mating between Incubi and a human female will automatically result in a pregnancy unless aborted. For more detailed information on this subject, a good reference is *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* by Russel Hope Robbins (New York: Crown Publishers, 1959).

When a hero is summoned, the GM should not pull (what I consider to be) the dirty trick of having the hero arrive in a battered or wounded state. If the GM makes the Ritual difficult enough to perform successfully in the first place, there is no reason to play little "games" with the players.

The Ritual of True Speaking should be enacted out in real time if at all possible, with the GM acting out the part of the Demon and the player enacting the part of his character. If there is no time, this may be shortened, but the GM should always strive to simulate the conversation as it would take place in as much detail as possible (this is *role* playing after all).■■

Film & Television

A Year in Review

It's unfortunate that the absence of *Ares*™ magazine occurred during one of the golden years for science fiction films. At least in volume it was a golden year, if not in quality. Brushing aside some of the near misses, like *Tron* and *Endangered Species*, this reviewer chooses six films as the hits which appeared in 1982.

Taking them in order from worst to best, John Carpenter's *The Thing* falls to the bottom of the heap. Carpenter's previous slash 'em action pictures in no way prepared him to take on the complexities found in John W. Campbell's "Who Goes There," the novella upon which Howard Hawks' classic film and the remake are based.

The remake picks up halfway through the storyline of the first film; if the ending of Hawks' classic was rewritten so that all the characters died, the new *The Thing* could be considered a sequel. Carpenter's intention was to take the original story and tell it completely. "Who Goes There" requires a good deal of special effects, which the state of cinema art was not up to when the original was filmed. Rather than cheapen the film with shoddy effects, Hawks and company rewrote the story, retaining as much of the human conflict as possible while eliminating scenes calling for outlandish production demands.

Carpenter has done just the reverse, cutting the humanity in the film to nil and loading it with special effects. True enough, the effects are superb and the transformations of the alien throughout the film are continually shocking, but they are *all* the film has to offer. Like *The Howling, The Thing* has some of the best special effects to be seen in a horror film, but precious little else.

Unlike his *Halloween* in which the audience was caught up worrying about the fates of the main characters, Carpenter's *Thing* has characters who do not arouse the least concern. By the end most audiences left in a daze, scratching their heads and agreeing in general that, like *King Kong*, the original was better.

No other science-fiction film in 1982 caused more pre-release speculation than *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*. After the disastrous first film, no one was sure if the damage to the *Star Trek* legend could be repaired. Fortunately for all, the film has given the legend new life.

The costumes were improved as were the sets and special effects. The story had a tight plot line and lots of action. Rather than amalgamating several stories from the television show as happened in the first film, the new *Star Trek* movie continued one prior story and plugged in an odd subplot here and there, giving the movie enough substance to stand alone.

The first film had been plagued by pretension, assuming the basic premise was more portentous than it turned out to be. Its weak production values made the thinness of the plot glaring. By not taking itself so seriously — that is, realizing the film should be an action adventure with elements of pathos and philosophy gently added — *The Wrath of Khan* succeeded brilliantly. For those who loved the series, it was a dream come true (to such an extent that many refuse to acknowledge the existence of the first film as part of the *Star Trek* epos). The film's success makes it seem likely that more will follow; the word is that a new *Star Trek* film will be released every 18 months. If the quality can be kept up to the level of *The Wrath of Khan*, there will be a devoted audience waiting.

Though I venture the wrath of thousands, I do not give *E.T.* top accolades. Despite Steven Spielberg's tight, well-drawn direction, Melissa Mathison's human and touching script, the incredible special effects — including E.T. himself —and all the other fine bits of work which went into the movie, *E.T.* is *not* a science fiction film — not really.

E.T. is the story of a young boy who finds a being from outer space and, through caring for his discovery, learns to love again. If the SF trappings are put aside, the plot could just as easily have centered on a chimp which has escaped from the zoo. *E.T.* ties with *The Wrath of Khan* for fourth place; *The Thing* comes in last because it is all effects and no substance, and *Star Trek II* suffers from the same old tired actors and their cardboard acting styles, which worked better on the small screen than the large one (though the film did take honest stabs at true science fiction themes — creation and universal destruction — and worked on getting honest human emotions across). *E.T.* dons the trappings of the genre without really relying on the substance, touching as the film may be.

The top three films of 1982 share the best factors of the genre for films: good acting, solid direction, excellent soundtracks, well-plotted scripts, and intriguing special effects. Best of all, they are solidly rooted in the genre they claim to represent.

Cat People is distinguished as one of the year's top science fantasies for several reasons; aside from its superior camera work, tight story line and the rest, the movie told a story that mainstream filmmakers shy away from — a sexual story. It did not involve the characters (or the performers) in a vulgar display as most sexually-oriented films seem to do. Rather it was a highly erotic, sensual story which at the same time filled the audience with apprehension and horror. Director Paul Schrader set himself a goal and met it. The film asks the audience to accept biological transmutation of matter, consciousness transferral, and the mating of different species, yet the style of the film helps the audience overcome its disbelief and accept such matters easily.

The film seems specially written for Natassia Kinsky and Malcolm McDowell, whose overpowering personalities make the special effects secondary. A film that sacrifices characters for sights and sets is a gimmick, not a movie —which is why it is easy to remember *Star Wars* and simple to forget *Battlestar Galactica*.

One might describe *Road Warrior* as a

(continued on page 43)

Media

The Dumb Leading the "Blind"

NATO is at war again, with 13 of the United States targeted by their latest offensive.

NATO, in this case, is the National Association of Theatre Owners, and New Jersey, Arizona, Florida, and ten other states are where it will introduce its anti-blind-bidding legislation next. NATO's nemesis is the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), headed up by Jack Valenti, the man who gave the world his movie ratings system.

Blind bidding, mentioned before in this column, is the process whereby theatre owners pay prohibitive amounts to procure what they hope will be hit films, without ever seeing what they are paying for. They often pay handsomely to secure the drawing power of a title (*Superman II* is a good example, *Revenge of the Jedi* a better one) over a year in advance of its premiere date. The strategy on the part of the distributors is, "buy it now or you can't have it," and the resultant seasonal scramble for the most coveted films — a "bidding war" — frequently makes the floor of the New York Stock Exchange at high noon look like a deserted mortuary.

Distributors entice exhibitors with marketing strategies based on survey tactics like the "tracking study" — saturation polling of age/sex cross-sections of "typical" moviegoers. This is one reason more recent films are playing it safe, with pre-sold ingredients designed to appease the tastes of the largest demographic audience.

It is also the accountant's approach to movie marketing, and the reason why solid "minor" films (like *Cutter's Way, Carny,* or *Heart Beat*) suffocate from lack of publicity against the flashbang, mega-budget casserole epics. In *The Dodgem Division*, Michael Moorcock asserts that "most publishers, magazines, journals, were incapable of knowing what the modern public wished to read, and they blamed their falling sales on everything but their own judgement." Similarly, a suffocated film's ad thrust may undergo a last-ditch shift of appeal, but if it dies, the PR munchkins rarely get the blame. Nor do the distributors, who failed to find a financially rewarding pigeonhole for their "property." And if it succeeds *despite* the demographic way of life, then the businessmen call it a "sleeper."

Case in point: *Time Bandits,* probably 1981's biggest sleeper — a film that struggled to find a distributor. It had no upfront stars, no easily categorizable storyline; it was an independent, thus not from a major studio, and had no name production personnel. Apparently, no one who had given *Time Bandits* a thumbs-down verdict had ever heard of Monty Python, and when Avco-Embassy finally picked it up, it collected the largest three-day gross in the company's history.

What went wrong? Nothing. The other distributors still had *Raiders of the Lost Ark* on the brain, that's all.

The point of all this is that blind bidding, which NATO is working to abolish, determines in large part which films you will see as

a result of exposure to those seasonal advertising blitzes. Blind bidding was begun by the MPAA, which directly serves the interests of the eleven largest producer/distributors in the country. 34% of 1980's 234 theatrical releases were blind-bid. The practice relates directly to the huge advance prices paid by exhibitors, and its escalation ultimately translates as higher ticket prices.

The MPAA also determines what you'll watch via its system of ratings, described for what it really is by Leslie Halliwell (in his *Filmgoer's Companion*) as "a censorship code." The ratings — *X, R, PG* (formerly *M*) and *G* — were outmoded almost from their inception in 1968, but endured because they supported the illusion that distributors were socially conscious. They quickly degenerated into a lever used by the MPAA to enforce cuts on already finished films.

"R" is a distributor's favorite rating. It implies, to the filmgoer, the presence of "adult material," that is, requisite dollops of sex, violence and profanity. Some films of PG content use the R rating to "legitimize" themselves in terms of adult content, or audience expectation, such as *The Warriors* or *Escape from New York,* which certainly *would* have been R-worthy ten years ago. Now, more nudity than was in *Midnight Cowboy* (1969) is routinely sanctioned for current PG films, and the PG rating for *Jaws* in 1975 meant that excessive gore was okay for the MPAA's imaginary under-17 audience, as well.

The excesses to follow, however, presented problems, and censoring recommenced. All scenes of both sex *and* gore were clipped from *Friday the 13th II* before it was permitted to go from an *X* to an *R,* for example.

But why would anyone sit through an obvious stalk-and-slash potboiler, if not for the sex scenes and gore effects, the very things emphasized heavily in the film's promotion? If you couldn't tell from the TV commercials whether you (or your child) should see *Friday the 13th II*, then you lack the faculties needed for watching movies anyway.

Curiously, filmmakers are not required to submit to the MPAA, although the distributors who pick up the films do so voluntarily, as though ratings were a proof of professional legitimacy. George Romero proved how stupid *that* idea was by eschewing the MPAA's dictates and making a bundle of money with no rating at all on *Dawn of the Dead*. Penthouse Productions' profitable *Caligula* also went without — thankfully, there seems to be a trend brewing here.

MPAA president Jack Valenti's solution to the calcified ratings system is to add *more* ratings. What is actually needed is a system much like that used by the *Calendar* section of the *Los Angeles Times,* which specifies "explicit love scenes," "hair-raising language," "some sexual innuendo," "intricate premise," etc., in *individual* cases. But if that were to happen, and if NATO wins those 13 target states (adding them to the 22 already secured), Valenti and the MPAA would be out of work.

The body count continues, indeed.

David J. Schow

GAMES RATING CHART

SCIENCE FICTION & SCIENCE FANTASY

Title	Pub	Pub Date	Price	Accep	%	Comp	Time	Soli
1. Imperium	GDW	12/77	10	7.3	32	6.1	6	2.5
2. Creature...Sheboygan	SPI	4/79	8	7.1	63	5.0	1	6.5
3. GEV	MGC	78	3	7.1	41	5.0	2	6.5
4. Freedom in the Galaxy	SPI	6/79	20	7.1	36	7.0	7	5.5
5. Starfleet Battles	TFG	79	13	7.1	29	6.5	2	6.5
6. Sword & the Stars	SPI	7/80	12	7.0	25	6.3	5	5.5
7. Ogre	MGC	5/77	3	7.0	52	4.8	1	6.5
8. Voyage of the Pandora	SPI	1/81	na	6.9	81	6.5	2	9.0
9. Dark Nebula	GDW	2/80	6	6.8	11	5.6	2	2.5
10. Battlefleet: Mars	SPI	4/77	18	6.8	32	6.8	6	3.0
11. Traveller	GDW	7/77	12	6.8	44	6.2	5	5.5
12. Starfire II	TFG	80	4	6.8	16	na	na	na
13. John Carter of Mars	SPI	5/79	20	6.7	32	6.0	4	5.5
14. Stellar Conquest	MGC	2/75	13	6.7	22	5.8	6	3.0
15. Asteroid	GDW	80	6	6.7	19	5.5	2	4.0
16. Cosmic Encounters	EP	76	12	6.7	26	3.5	1	2.0
17. TimeTripper	SPI	7/80	8	6.5	12	6.0	2	7.0
18. Objective: Moscow	SPI	3/78	27	6.5	18	5.0	30	5.0
19. Triplanetary	GDW	9/73	10	6.5	12	5.7	2	4.6
20. Villains & Vigillantes	FGUI	na	6	6.5	5	na	na	na
21. Wreck of the Pandora	SPI	5/80	8	6.4	69	6.0	3	7.0
22. Space Opera	FGUI	80	18	6.4	8	6.0	4	1.0
23. Snapshot	GDW	6/79	8	6.3	19	5.3	1	4.0
24. After the Holocaust	SPI	1/77	18	6.3	22	7.5	7	7.0
25. Mayday	GDW	2/78	5	6.2	21	4.9	2	4.0
26. Starship Troopers	AH	7/76	15	6.2	53	5.0	2	3.5
27. Starweb	FB	76	10	6.2	12	5.5	na	na
28. Invasion: America	SPI	12/75	18	6.1	30	5.5	6	4.5
29. Bloodtree Rebellion	GDW	11/79	13	6.1	28	6.0	5	2.5
30. Doctor Who	GW	na	20	6.1	4	na	na	na
31. Belter	GDW	6/79	12	6.0	11	5.8	4	2.5
32. Starforce	SPI	9/74	12	6.0	45	6.0	4	4.5
33. Outreach	SPI	11/76	12	6.0	36	6.0	5	4.0
34. Robots	TFG	80	4	6.0	11	5.8	2	5.5
35. War in the Ice	SPI	1/79	18	5.9	26	6.8	5	4.5
36. Star Soldier	SPI	1/77	12	5.9	27	7.1	2	3.5
37. Godsfire	MGC	79	16	5.9	14	7.1	8	1.5
38. Starfleet Battle Manual	GS	77	6	5.9	10	6.3	5	1.0
39. Warp War	MGC	77	3	5.9	37	4.5	1	5.0
40. Time War	YP	8/79	13	5.9	8	na	na	na
41. Marine: 2002	YP	12/79	17	5.8	6	6.1	4	5.0
42. Starfire	TFG	6/79	5	5.7	8	na	na	na
43. StarGate	SPI	4/79	4	5.7	30	5.5	2	6.0
44. Olympica	MGC	na	3	5.6	24	5.5	1	2.0
45. Space Quest	TYR	na	na	5.6	5	na	na	na
46. Ice War	MGC	78	3	5.6	23	5.0	2	6.5
47. Lords of Middle Sea	TC	7/78	10	5.6	6	na	na	na
48. Ultimatum	YP	6/79	na	5.6	9	4.5	1	1.0
49. WorldKiller	SPI	3/80	8	5.6	59	3.5	1	4.0
50. Double Star	GDW	3/78	10	5.6	15	5.5	5	5.0
51. Cerberus	TFG	6/79	4	5.6	7	na	na	na
52. Artifacts	MGC	80	4	5.5	10	5.5	2	6.0
53. Alpha Omega	AH	7/77	15	5.5	11	na	na	na
54. Starfall	YP	8/79	13	5.5	26	na	na	na
55. Chitin: 1	MGC	77	3	5.4	28	5.8	1	3.5
56. Awful Green Things	TSR	80	8	5.4	28	5.2	2	6.0
57. Rescue from the Hive	SPI	3/81	8	5.3	72	6.2	3	6.5
58. Vector 3	SPI	4/79	4	5.3	30	5.8	2	3.0
59. Titan Strike	SPI	4/79	4	5.3	29	6.0	2	5.5
60. Kung Fu 2100	SJG	80	3	5.3	16	5.3	3	5.7
61. Gamma World	TSR	78	10	5.3	21	na	na	na
62. Hot Spot	MGC	79	3	5.3	12	5.9	1	2.5
63. Starships & Spacemen	FGUI	na	7	5.3	8	na	na	na
64. Black Hole	MGC	78	3	5.2	23	5.0	2	6.5
65. Warriors Green Planet	FF	na	6	5.2	4	na	na	na
66. Rivets	MGC	79	3	5.2	30	5.2	1	2.1
67. Invasion of Air Eaters	MGC	79	3	5.2	18	5.6	1	2.4
68. Strange New Worlds	HG	na	10	5.1	6	na	na	na
69. Asteroid Zero-Four	TFG	6/79	4	5.0	9	na	na	na
70. Dune	AH	6/79	15	5.0	21	3.0	2	2.0
71. Metamorphosis/Alpha	TSR	76	5	5.0	23	6.0	9	1.0
72. War Sky Galleons	FF	na	6	4.8	4	na	na	na
73. Space Marines	FnT	na	6	4.8	4	na	na	na
74. Star Fighter	BL	na	na	4.7	5	na	na	na
75. Amoeba Wars	AH	5/81	16	4.7	15	4.3	3	4.5
76. 4th Dimension	TSR	79	10	4.6	6	na	na	na
77. Darkover	EP	79	12	4.5	7	4.5	3	3.0
78. Star Patrol	GS	77	7	4.4	5	na	na	na
79. Alien Space	GS	73	7	4.4	11	na	na	na
80. Star Probe	TSR	na	na	4.4	12	6.0	5	2.5
81. Annihilator/One World	MGC	79	3	4.4	18	2.5	1	1.5

FANTASY

Title	Pub	Pub Date	Price	Accep	%	Comp	Time	Soli
1. Runequest	TC	8/78	12	7.4	16	7.0	7	1.0
2. DragonQuest	SPI	7/80	12	7.0	35	6.5	6	1.0
3. Melee	MGC	79	3	7.0	52	5.3	1	6.5
4. War of the Ring	SPI	11/77	20	7.0	58	6.1	6	4.5
5. Robin Hood	OSG	80	5	7.0	10	5.8	2	6.0
6. Adventures in Fantasy	EG	80	25	6.9	17	6.5	6	1.0
7. Wizard	MGC	79	3	6.9	39	5.8	1	6.0
8. White Bear/Red Moon	TC	11/76	10	6.7	16	5.0	3	6.0
9. Chivalry & Sorcery	FGUI	na	10	6.7	27	7.0	6	1.0
10. Dungeons & Dragons	TSR	12/74	10	6.7	62	6.5	5	1.0
11. Swashbuckler	YP	80	7	6.7	16	4.5	2	6.0
12. QUiRKS	EP	80	12	6.6	9	5.0	23	4.0
13. Death Test	MGC	79	3	6.6	35	5.8	1	7.0
14. Swords & Sorcery	SPI	7/78	20	6.5	35	6.0	3	5.0
15. Nomad Gods	TC	5/77	10	6.4	12	5.2	3	6.0
16. Advanced D&D	TSR	79	39	6.4	49	6.0	5	1.0
17. Citadel of Blood	SPI	11/80	8	6.4	68	6.5	2	7.0
18. Intruder	TFG	1/80	4	6.4	16	5.7	2	6.0
19. Death Test II	MGC	80	4	6.4	24	5.8	2	7.0
20. DeathMaze	SPI	11/79	8	6.1	40	5.1	2	5.0
21. Tunnels & Trolls	FB	75	8	6.1	18	6.6	5	1.0
22. Hammer of Thor	GmS	80	19	6.1	6	6.7	4	3.0
23. Valkenberg Castle	TFG	1/80	4	6.1	9	na	na	na
24. Gondor	SPI	11/77	4	6.0	38	5.5	4	4.5
25. En Garde!	GDW	7/75	10	6.0	18	5.7	2	6.2
26. Arena of Death	SPI	9/80	8	6.0	68	6.0	1	6.0
27. Treasure Silver Dragon	MGC	80	4	6.0	17	6.0	2	6.8
28. Empire of Petal Throne	GS	6/77	25	5.9	21	7.4	9	1.0
29. Divine Right	TSR	79	10	5.9	27	5.2	4	6.0
30. Sauron	SPI	11/77	4	5.8	39	6.6	4	5.5
31. Dungeon!	TSR	75	10	5.8	29	na	na	na
32. Sticks and Stones	MGC	78	3	5.7	23	5.0	2	6.5
33. Dawn of the Dead	SPI	7/80	8	5.6	24	5.0	2	6.8
34. Ragnarok	SPI	5/81	8	5.6	68	5.3	3	6.5
35. Wizard's Quest	AH	79	15	5.6	21	4.5	2	2.0
36. Demons	SPI	11/79	8	5.6	32	5.2	2	7.0
37. Elric	TC	7/77	13	5.5	9	4.5	3	3.0
38. Lords of Underearth	MGC	81	4	5.5	11	5.8	2	6.5
39. Sorcerer	SPI	10/75	15	5.5	36	6.0	2	6.0
40. Swordquest	TFG	12/79	5	5.5	8	na	na	na
41. Monsters Monsters	MGC	76	4	5.5	15	6.0	9	1.0
42. Stomp!	TC	11/79	3	5.4	10	na	na	na
43. Citadel	FGUI	na	5	5.4	8	na	na	na
44. Tribes of Crane	SS	78	3	5.4	8	na	na	na
45. Lords & Wizards	FGUI	na	12	5.3	8	na	na	na
46. Bushido	PG	80	10	5.3	12	6.3	3	1.0
47. Land of the Rising Sun	FGUI	80	18	5.3	9	6.3	3	1.0
48. King Arthur's Knights	TC	7/78	10	5.1	6	na	na	na
49. Arduin Grimoire	GG	79	28	5.1	11	na	na	na
50. Snit's Revenge	TSR	78	7	5.0	22	na	na	na
51. Spellmaker	BL	na	na	5.0	7	na	na	na
52. Mythology	YP	4/80	14	5.0	6	7.0	3	4.5
53. Spellbinder	TFG	80	4	5.0	6	5.8	3	3.0
54. Shooting Stars	YP	80	7	4.9	5	na	na	na
55. Dragon Lords	FGUI	na	12	4.9	4	na	na	na
56. Sword Quest	TFG	12/79	5	4.9	13	na	na	na
57. Knights Round Table	GS	76	6	4.9	4	na	na	na
58. Knights of Camelot	TSR	na	10	4.8	5	na	na	na
59. Magic Realm	AH	6/79	15	4.8	35	7.0	3	1.0
60. Beastlord	YP	6/79	15	4.7	22	7.0	5	4.0
61. Bunnies & Burrows	FGUI	na	6	4.7	8	na	na	na
62. Chainmail	TSR	75	6	4.7	15	na	na	na
63. Lankhmar	TSR	8/76	12	4.5	12	na	na	na
64. War of the Wizards	TSR	na	na	4.5	10	na	na	na
65. Hero	YP	80	7	4.5	10	4.5	2	7.0
66. Caverns Deep	RP	na	16	4.4	4	2.5	1	5.0
67. Dimension Demons	MGC	80	4	4.4	6	5.0	3	6.3
68. Battle of 5 Armies	DSR	na	na	4.4	9	na	na	na

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS: *AH:* Avalon Hill; *EG:* Excalibre Games; *EP:* Eon Products; *FB:* Flying Buffalo Inc.; *FF:* Facts & Fantasy; *FGUI:* Fantasy Games Unlimited Inc.; *GDW:* Game Designers' Workshop; *GG:* Grimoire Games; *GmS:* Gameshop; *GS:* GameScience; *GW:* Games Workshop Ltd.; *HG:* Heritage Games; *JG:* Judges Guild; *MGC:* Metagaming Concepts; *OSG:* Operational Studies Group; *PG:* Phoenix Games; *SJG:* Steve Jackson Games; *SS:* Schubel & Sons; *TC:* The Chaosium; *TFG:* Task Force Games; *TSR:* TSR Hobbies Inc.; *TYR:* Tyr Gamemakers; *YP:* Yaquinto Publications. *Acceptability Rating* is the game's overall popularity. *% Played* is the percentage of readers who have played the game within the last 12 months. *Complexity Rating* is the relative complexity of a game on a scale of 1 (simplest) to 9. *Solitaire* is a game's ease of solitaire play on a scale of 1 (nearly impossible) to 9.

Books

The Restaurant at the End of Time, Douglas Adams, Harmony Books, $7.95 (hardcover)

The Anarch Lords, A. Bertram Chandler, DAW Books, $2.25

Tintangel, Paul H. Cook, Berkley Books, $2.25

The Morphodite, M.A. Foster, DAW Books, $2.75

Esbae: A Winter's Tale, Linda Haldeman, Avon Books, $2.50

The Soul Eater, Mike Resnick, Signet Books, $2.25

Madwand. Roger Zelazny, Ace Books, $6.95 (trade paperback)

Roger Zelazny is one of the most imaginative science fiction writers around. Books like *Lord of Light*, the Amber series, and *Doorways in the Sand* established his reputation as a major writer in the field — and proved also his thoughtfulness and the crispness of his prose. His books of late, though — *The Changing Land, The Changeling,* and now *Madwand* — have proven to be something of a disappointment.

Madwand is a sequel to *The Changeling*. The protagonist of the series, Pol Detson, was born to a powerful, evil wizard in a fantasy land, and was exchanged for a child from earth in his early years so that he might not fall heir to his father's powers. In *The Changeling*, he killed his changeling-brother who sought to subjugate magic to technology; in *Madwand*, he fights an evil wizard, a past associate of his father. Seen purely as an adventure novel, *Madwand* is undoubtedly successful; the plot twists are surprising, the background colorful, and the magic portrayed by Zelazny imaginative. However, there seems to be something missing, and I think that something is the lack of a strong central character.

Many previous writers have used the device of a character from our world transposed into a fantasy land. It's a useful device since it promotes the reader's identification with the character, and can lend itself to social commentary and to emphasizing the differences between the two lands. In *The Changeling* series, however, Detson's earthly origin is underplayed; his motivations rarely seem to stem fom his experiences on earth. Despite the depth that a terrestrial origin, interacting with a different world, might lend him, Detson remains a faceless character, with little reason for the reader to identify with him. Even his thiefly companion, Mouseglove, seems to have more identity.

All of this is peculiar because strong and unusual central characters are Zelazny's forte. To mention but one, consider the protagonist of *My Name Is Legion,* who exists as a mole within the bowels of the electronic society — recorded nowhere in the records of a computerized world, but able to manipulate the computers which run it.

A bad Zelazny, to be sure, is considerably better than a lot of good others; but Zelazny will have to do some work to equal his previous books.

Linda Haldeman's *Esbae: A Winter's Tale* is a charming book that reminds me of the childrens' fantasy I used to read when younger. It takes place on an undistinguished college campus, where a particularly undistinguished student named Chuck has decided to summon the demon Asmodeus to help him write his history paper. The protagonist, studious Sophie, helps him out, never dreaming that he will succeed. Unfortunately for all concerned, Asmodeus wants Sophie as a sacrifice for helping Chuck — so she must enlist the aid of her history professor in the evolving duel of magic.

The premise of the novel may sound silly, but Haldeman handles it well. *Esbae* is permeated with a vision of college life that seems like something from a better, bygone era: professors puffing contentedly on pipes, enthusiastic student choirs, red-cheeked students frolicking in the snow. Against this faintly mythical backdrop, the efficacy of spells culled from medieval grimoires seems not at all unreasonable. *Esbae* is pleasant fantasy.

John Grimes is a sort of science fictional Horatio Hornblower. Hero of what seems like dozens of A. Bertram Chandler's novels, Grimes as a spaceman has held practically every position aboard a spaceship that a man can hold. The Grimes novels are of uneven quality, but are often interesting and always entertaining. For those who like traditional SF and a have a penchant for series, they are a blessing.

In the last Grimes novel, our hero was arrested for piracy. Naturally, he is no pirate, and the Federation knows the full story, but prefers not to release it for security reasons. As well, Grimes was at least arguably guilty of misconduct, and must be punished; in *The Anarch Lords* his Master Astronaut's Certificate of competency is withdrawn, and, worse — he is given a desk job.

A desk job as Planetary Governor of Liberia. That might not sound like punishment, until one realizes that Liberia is a planet settled by anarchosyndicalists who practice a modified form of slavery and have little love for the Federation or anyone else. As Planetary Governor, Grimes has a full-time job just keeping alive...

A. Bertram Chandler isn't exactly the next James Joyce, but he's a pleasant man with whom to spend an evening.

If science fiction is a literature of ideas, M.A. Foster's *The Morphodite* is a novel built around three ideas. The first of these is a society built upon hostility to change. The book takes place on Lisagor, a planet settled by a group of fanatical luddites who decided to institute a society where change was impermissible, indeed was considered obscene. The second idea is a theory of history and human action: that in every group or every society there exists a key person upon whom the stability of the group depends. If that key person is removed, the group or society comes to pieces. According to the theory, however, the visible people, the leaders, are not the key people — not Napoleon or Hitler — instead, the key people are hidden or unknown. An assassin who attempts to destroy an enemy by eliminating the leadership is committing an error; he must reach the key people.

Naturally, a society opposed to change must be repressive, and naturally it has its underground opposition. In the course of the novel, an assassin is imbued with this theory of history and released to kill the key person who holds the society together. According to Foster, the assassin develops a mathematical theory of cultural dynamics from which he is able to identify the society's key person, which strikes me as an absurd proposition, though perhaps a logically possible one.

The third idea is that it is possible, via training and hormonal stimulation, to turn a person into a shape-changer — one with the ability to change shape at will, from one human form to another. Foster's biological explanation of how this is done is absurd, but it is clear he is more interested in the effect than the rationale. This idea seems to have been added initially as a fillip, to help the assassin survive after committing his murder — but becomes the most important single element of the novel.

For *The Morphodite* is, in the final analysis, a psychological novel. It investigates the philosophy of a man whose memory is wiped, who is intensively trained as an assassin, and who is given this shape-changing ability. The novel is about how the assassin changes, both mentally and physically.

As a psychological novel, *The Morphodite* succeeds; it is interesting, involving and believable. As a political thriller (which is what its blurb implies it is), it fails. Why? Because the nature of the society and of its opposition is never explored sufficiently to become either interesting or believable. Because the motivations of the political string-pullers are never anything more than obscure. Because the philosophical questions of politics and power are never explored.

The Morphodite is different from what we think of as traditional science fiction because it is a psychological novel, which is something we associate with mainstream fiction; yet it is a novel which attempts to explore unusual ideas, which is the essence of science fiction.

Paul H. Cook's *Tintagel* seems to drift amidst philosophy, adventure fiction, and hostility to technology without finding a port at any one. Hostility to technology is evident since *Tintagel* is another techno-dystopia, in which the depredations of pollution, resource exhaustion, and ecocatastrophe are gradually destroying human civilization. The major premise of the novel is that something called Liu Shan's Syndrome has become endemic in the human race. If a sufferer of the Syndrome allows himself to become lost in music, he becomes, quite literally, lost in the music; he disappears from this world, to appear in a parallel universe. The choice of the universe is made by a combination of his mental state, and the music to which he was listening at the time. The protagonists of the novel is a Stalker, one of an elite group who can travel to universes and back at whim and who make a living retrieving victims of the Syndrome. Unfortunately, they can't keep up, and the human race is gradually being decimated.

Adventure fiction comes in because of the dangers which our protagonist must face in the alternate universes he enters, and because of the political struggle being waged

(continued on page 43)

STAR TRADER *(continued from page 16)*

CREW SUBVERSION TABLE

2D	EFFECT ON TARGET	EFFECT ON REPUTATION
2-6	0	0
7-11	0	10
12-15	1	8
16-18	2	6
19-20	3	4
21-22	4	0
23 or more	5*	OP-8

MODIFIERS:
Add subverting player's Criminal Connection Level to dice roll.
Add 2 if subverting player pays the target crew's bounty value.

EFFECT ON TARGET:
Subtract the effect number from the level of the crew quality. Thus an effect of 2 on the target would make an **A** crew a **C** crew, or a **B** crew a **D** crew. If the effect causes the crew to drop below **D**, the crew deserts; during the Investment Phase of the next turn, the owner must purchase a new crew. If the result is 5*, the crew deserts *and* damages the ship. The subverting player rolls on the Sabotage Table to determine the damage; the player must roll for reputation loss on this table, however.

EFFECT ON REPUTATION:
Results indicate the number of Reputation Points lost by the subverting payer. OP-8 indicates the subverter may choose any other player to lose 8 Reputation Points.

Hyperjump Costs

The time and costs of interplanetary and interstellar travel vary greatly. As described in *Universe*, time and energy required for interstellar travel depends on the location of each system's jump point. To calculate the cost of an interstellar voyage in *StarTrader*, locate the points of origin and destination on the following list:

Beta Hydri	**6**	Mu Herculis	**7**
Epsilon Eridani	**4**	Sigma Draconis	**4**
Gamma Leporis	**8**	Tau Ceti	**6**

Add the two numbers together and then subtract the Hyperjump Chance from this sum. The result of this calculation is the number of HT's the player must expend to conduct the hyperjump.

Political Corruption

A corporation may become so powerful in a system that it in effect becomes a hidden government. In any system with a Law Level less than 3, a player who has political connections of 6 or more and who occupies the Market Manager position in the majority of goods traded there, may impose a tax on other players wishing to do business in that system. This tax equals 20% of the value of any assets (warehouses, factories, and stored goods) that another player may have in that system, payable each turn, plus 30% of the value of any transactions performed in that system on that turn. Thus, if a player sold or bought 60 HT's worth of goods in that system, he would have to pay 18 HT's to the player in control. This player also is protected from being demoted from his Market Manager position, in that another player attempting to decrease his position must pay 40 HT's instead of 20 HT's to make the try. ■■

FILM & TV *(continued from page 40)*

Raiders of the Lost Ark without the comedy. Though the objection might be raised that this film is no more science fictional than *E.T.*, it is deeper into the genre than the latter. In *Road Warrior*, a world in total social collapse and economic ruin is chillingly portrayed. Aside from the not so simple fact of staying alive, the main concern of the characters is to seek the last remaining wealth —fuel. Though the story could have centered on people hoarding gold or some other form of treasure and keeping the "bad guys" from getting it —thus becoming a simple fantasy or adventure film — there is much emphasis shown on how the future came to be the way it is pictured and how people have been influenced by the collapse of normality.

Its taut scripting, exceptional performances, and pulse-pounding pacing, which leaves an audience breathless, combine to make it one of the best SF films of the year. It also has the courage to show what the face of death *really* looks like. Mel Gibson's portrayal of Max is hard, bitter and realistic; he is neither hero nor coward, but a man caught up in a mad future which he confronts unafraid.

And, the winner is... *Bladerunner*. Misunderstood by audiences and critics alike, it is by far the best *science fiction* film of the year. It paints a hard and strident vision of the future, an oppressive black and white city-state world surrounded by rain, smog and advertising — a place from which biologically fit humans are encouraged to migrate to the stars and leave the rest of festering humanity behind.

To the static, dying earth come rogue *replicants*, android humans created for slave labor. They are more intelligent, faster and stronger than their human masters, but if they step out of line, they are quickly executed ("retired"), the worst sin being that of passing themselves off as humans. A lone investigator (Harrison Ford) must attempt to track them down and eliminate the menace.

The film's strengths lie in its approach to the appearance of the dying world, the action and suspense of its rapid pace, the strong characterizations given by all the central performers, the creatively oppressive soundtrack, and the script's ability to keep the audience guessing all the way to the last scene. The final confrontation between hunter and hunted leads to a totally unexpected conclusion.

Bladerunner is a harsh, depressing film, but one deeply etched from the science fiction tradition. *E.T.*, on the other hand, is a piece of fluff, with only the outward appearances of the genre. The fact that *E.T.* pulled the largest box office of any picture last year, while *Bladerunner* died, is more a statement about the desires of a public trapped in a depression than the abilities of the filmmakers. *E.T.* was a picture about hope. *Bladerunner* was a little too real for most people, the differences between what they saw on the screen and what they could see in their own futures being not too different. Needless to say, *E.T.* got the repeat business.

It didn't deserve it.

Christopher John

BOOKS *(continued from page 42)*

for control of the American Presidency. Philosophy enters as our protagonist attempts to struggle with his experiences and with what is happening to his world.

I cannot blankly approve or disapprove *Tintagel*. I enjoyed reading it, but it contains a number of logical errors — and never seems quite to click. Perhaps the best thing to say is that Cook is trying to do something much more ambitious than, say, Chandler has done; and that to say that he has not entirely succeeded is not to condemn him for trying. If I see another book by Cook on the shelves, I shall buy it; and maybe that's the best recommendation that can be made.

Mike Resnick tries to do something different. In *The Soul Eater*, he seems to be desperately trying to write a moving psychological novel while retaining the best of SF — colorful settings and fast action. An indication may be the promotional quotes on the cover; Malzberg, hardly your typical writer of cheerful, traditional SF, recommends it highly.

All of this seems one step from the bizarre, since what Resnick has written is traditional action SF. The psychological element is evident in the obsession of the protagonist, Nicobar Lane. He becomes obsessed by a strange creature, called the Dreamwish Beast, which roams space; a professional hunter, he pursues it initially because of his profession, later because of his obsession. And his obsession cripples him and ages him before his time.

Profoundly moving? To the contrary... trite. Anyone who hasn't read *Moby Dick* at least knows the plot, I think. Refurbishing it as SF doesn't make it "interesting and original" as Malzberg claims.

As for the rest of the novel — well, it's well-written enough action for SF. It is, if you will, mindless fun, and recommended for aficionados thereof.

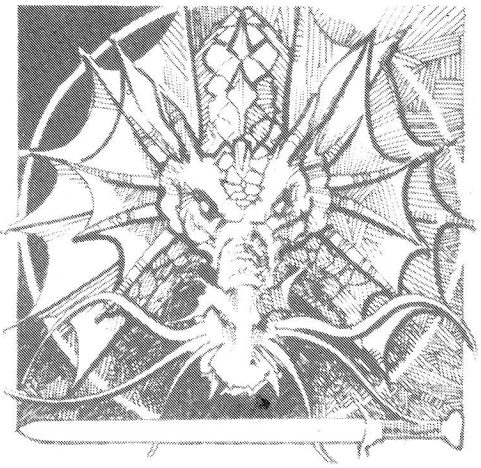
The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy was a novelization of the cult British science fiction radio show, and was highly successful both in North America and Britain. The novel was highly recommended in these pages when it first came out. Its sequel, *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*, has recently been issued.

Hitchhiker was a brilliant book — a strange distillation of Monty Python, science fiction, and some unusual SF ideas. The idea, for example, of a superintelligent shade of the color blue is perhaps one of the most bizarre to have entered SF in a long time. It would be difficult to follow *Hitchhiker* with something equally lunatic; alas, it has not, apparently, been possible to do so.

The strength of *Hitchhiker* was that the author tossed off bizarre idea after bizarre idea, running his characters through a sequence of absurd experiences, tying everything all together somehow with an entirely improbable plot. *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe* tries to do much the same thing, but some of the zest seems to be missing; the ideas are fewer, the happenings less dramatic. The author seems sometimes to be straining for the same effects he effortlessly achieved in *Hitchhiker*.

But it's still a very funny book

Greg Costikyan



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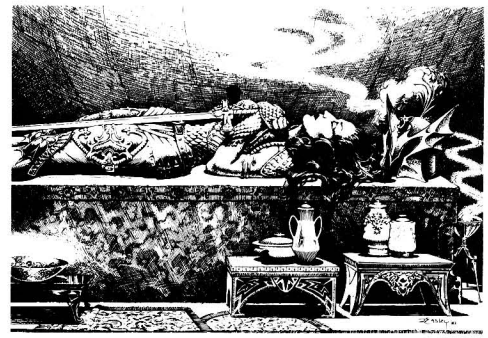

RPG
ROLE PLAYING GAMER

A Special Insert to *Ares*™ Magazine

In the late 70's, fantasy and science fiction gaming grew to prominence within the Adventure Gaming hobby, and *Ares*™ Magazine was born in response to that surge. Paralleling that growth, or more precisely nested within it, the category of role-playing games gained its own identity and an ever-growing number of participants. More than sixty percent of the *Ares* Magazine audience spends about a third of their total gaming time immersed in role-playing games of various descriptions. In order to serve that interest, and also to broaden the base for *Ares* Magazine, we present RPG, a proto-magazine for the role-playing gamers.

In future issues of the magazine, we will present adventures and supplementary materials for a number of role-playing systems, including the *Universe*™, *Gamma World*®, and *Star Frontiers*™ games, plus role-playing games published by other companies. Gamers interested in submitting materials for the RPG section should read the "Muse" column in this issue for details on how to submit materials to TSR Hobbies, Inc.

A DragonQuest™ Capsule Adventure

The Treasure of Socantri

I. Introduction

The *DragonQuest* game module, *The Treasure of Socantri,* is meant to be played in about 12 hours by four to six characters of *adventurer* level. It is designed to be presented as a single adventure, but can easily be incorporated into an ongoing campaign.

Before beginning the adventure, the GM should read and thoroughly familiarize himself with the background, layout and details of the stronghold, and possible situations which may arise. He should compare the details of the occurrences within the stronghold with the maps so the story becomes firmly fixed in his mind.

This adventure can prove particularly deadly if the characters are mentally and physically unprepared. If the GM feels the characters are not ready for this challenge, he may wish to vary the abilities of the monsters or reduce their Fatigue and Endurance Characteristics to balance the encounters. If more than six characters participate or their abilities are too strong, the GM should add an extra monster or two.

II. How To Read the Maps

Six maps are provided with this adventure. Four are detailed maps of Socantri's cliff stronghold, done at a scale of 1 hex equals 5 feet. The fifth shows the area surrounding the location of the possible land entrances to the stronghold, done at a scale of 1 hex equals 100 feet. The sixth map shows a cross section of the stronghold at a scale of 1 square equals 20 feet. The details of the overland journey are left up to the GM and should not substantially affect the adventure. **Note:** Due to the dangers inherent within the stronghold, the GM should not allow any encounters occurring during the overland journey to weaken the party.

The four maps of the stronghold divide those floors into rooms and areas with each having its own distinct ID number. The text of the room and area descriptions (see Section VI) is keyed to these ID numbers.

If the GM wishes to locate the stronghold on the *Frontiers of Alusia* map, it would be found in hex 41–207 along the coast. The characters should embark on their journey from either *Regar's Keep* (hex 18–036) or possibly *Westgate* (hex 35–067).

III. Briefings for the Players

There are actually two briefings the GM may use to entice the players to partake of the adventure, and both follow. They may be used separately or together in any manner the GM desires. One suggested method is to start the players off with Briefing #1 and then have Briefing #2 occur while the characters are on their overland journey to the stronghold.

It is not recommended that the GM read these briefings aloud to his players, but rather paraphrase them and present them in his own style. These briefings are to be treated as outlines for the GM and should be expanded and fleshed out prior to presenting them to the players.

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Briefing #1: The characters are approached by a member of the local Adventurers Guild with a proposal. A sponsor, a wealthy merchant (who shall remain nameless), is offering a large sum of money to any group of mercenaries who will assault, clean out and despoil a pirate stronghold approximately 200 miles west of the town. It seems these pirates have inherited a cave structure in a cliff face at the tip of a peninsula around which all the sponsor's ships must sail while on their homeward leg of their journeys.

For many years the pirate, named Socantri, had an unwritten agreement that he would not steal from the sponsor's ships, but recently he broke that agreement and ransacked the sponsor's richest vessel. The sponsor knows through his sources the stronghold has only 15–20 ruffians of meager skills manning it while the ships are out to sea. If the mercenaries attack within three weeks, the ships will be gone and the stronghold will be easy pickings for a stealthy, skillful party.

His payments are as follows: 10 True-silver Guineas (T.G.) to each adventurer who goes and returns with proof of the stronghold's demise. Five additional T.G.'s will be awarded to each member of the party who can prove they killed Socantri. One additional T.G. will be awarded to each member if they can recover a small (18″ tall) gold statuette of the sponsor's daughter (it is then described to them) which was taken on his last raid. The mercenaries may also keep any treasure they find for themselves. The representative will await an answer by tomorrow else he will seek others more enthusiastic.

If they accept, he will give directions to the stronghold, tell of only the main cliff entrance (see Section V) which he will claim he does not know how to open, and give them sketchy information about the cliff-top entrance (to room 13). He will recommend they enter that way. At this time there are no boats available to make the journey, so he recommends they travel by land.

Briefing #2: As the characters are travelling along a path one day, they hear moans off to one side in the bush. If they investigate, they will discover lying in the bush a male dwarf near death from many wounds. If they approach him, he will mutter something about "...no, no, not any more, please leave me alone..." until he sees these people are not out to harm him. He will then explain how he was waylayed by a large band of Hobgoblins who were attempting to steal his ring. They could not find it since he had hidden it magically in his clothing. They wanted it so they could get access to Socantri's treasure since they are outfitting for some uprising and need the money for arms and armor; they knew the ring was the key to get inside the pirate's hold.

The dwarf managed to convince them he did not have it and he tells the characters to keep it safe so that none may steal the treasure. It is a treasure beyond your dreams, he will claim, and should not be allowed to fall into evil hands. He will then expire, and if the characters search his clothing, they will find the ring in his undergarments along with a very sketchy map of the general location of the stronghold (no entrances will be shown). It is up to them to proceed from there.

These briefings may be altered by the GM so as to make them fit more coherently with his world.

IV. Briefing for the GM

Notes on #1. All that was told to the characters was the truth (so far as the sponsor knows it) but was not the whole story. The identity of the sponsor should not be too difficult to determine if the characters desire, and should be some very prominent merchant from the GM's world. He should value discretion in this matter because the abrogation of the agreement between Socantri and him (which was more than just unwritten and also involved the exchange of stolen goods) was due to a quarrel over the sponsor's daughter. Socantri was in love with her, but the sponsor would not allow the marriage; so Socantri broke the agreement. The sponsor wishes the attack to occur while the ships are away because killing Socantri (who would surely be out with his ship) would break his daughter's heart, and it is enough to simply wreck the operation.

Notes on #2. Again, all was true, but the dwarf actually did not know that much. His wild stories about the treasure (of which there actually is a great deal) are based on rumors he had heard. Prior to his demise, he was a fairly skillful thief who was headed to the stronghold on his own, having stolen the ring from the hand of a wealthy merchant's daughter. The map was obtained from a different source and the rumors of "treasure beyond your dreams" actually refer to Socantri's fairly considerable art collection, which was recently removed to another location (another adventure, perhaps?). The band of Hobgoblins actually do exist and may, if the characters dawdle, arrive at the stronghold sometime during the adventure. The original concept was that just the threat of them would put pressure on players to act quickly; they never arrived and were never planned to arrive.

When the characters arrive at the stronghold, they will not find what they expect (a small group of ill-trained pirates). They will find the place fairly ransacked, and here is what has occured: Socantri was an Adept of Greater Summoning who often called upon *Samigina* (the Marquis of Dead Souls) for advice and favors. Samigina tired of this, but Socantri was very skilled and Samigina never had the opportunity to retaliate. He was summoned by another adept in the area, it backfired, and Samigina saw his chance to get revenge. With a group of skeletons, he entered through the grotto (room 34) and wreaked his vengence. Then, wishing the pirates' vessel for some fell voyage (obviously the sponsor's info about the whereabouts of the pirates and their ship was erroneous), he has spent time prepping the ship for the trip (again, another adventure?).

The pirate band inherited this structure from its previous tenant, a Beast Master specializing in Fantastical Avians. They have done extensive work on the interior and were continuing to do so when Samigina attacked. They were having problems as the cliff was laced with underground streams, which they were constantly uncovering with their construction. They were always having to stop up leaks, and pools of water on the floor were a constant source of annoyance.

The pirates were unaware the spider had taken up residence in room 20 since they hardly went into it and their move had been recent. The same holds true for the Wyvern (who was an old friend of the Beast Master) and the gorilla. These creatures had all found entrances used by the Beast Master and not now used by the pirates. They were using these locations as shelter and had no idea of preying on the pirates (with the exception of the spider) since they were able to exit out of the cliff top and hunt.

The attack on the stronghold by Samigina took place two days prior to the arrival of the party.

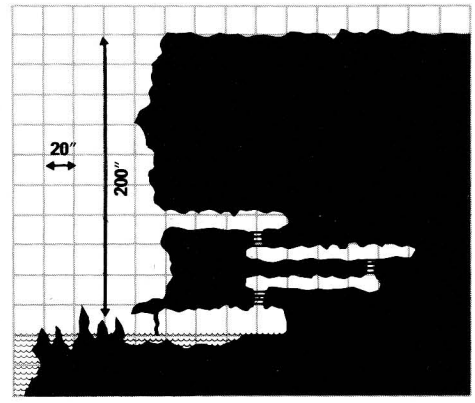
V. The Entrances to the Stronghold

When the characters arrive at the general location of the stronghold, they must find a way in. The "front door" (the main cliff-face entrance) can only be found from the level of the door in front of the cliff. In other words, the characters must get beyond the cliff top out over the water to see this entrance. This may be done either by magic or mechanical means. Once out there in the right location, it will be easy to see.

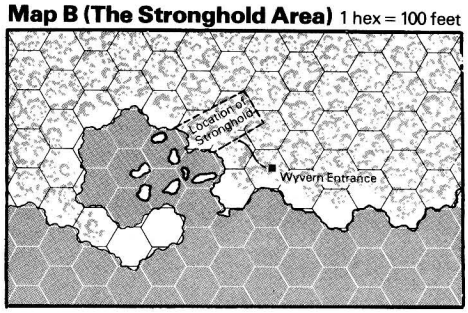
The spider's entrance (room 21) must be found in the same manner, but will be much harder to find, the spider having hidden his lair well. The gorilla's entrance (room 1) cannot be found. The Wyvern's entrance (room 13) will be easy to see if the characters look in the right place (the directions of the sponsor in Briefing #1 will lead them there).

The grotto entrance presents a problem. If the characters have access to a vessel and use it to get to the stronghold, they will have only a (Navigator's Rank × 2%) chance of negotiating the treacherous rocks which guard the entrance to the grotto. If they manage that feat, the pirate ship will not be there (Samigina will have taken it out for a trial run), but will be there when the characters return from any exploring they may do. All else remains the same. If the characters attempt to enter the grotto from above, they should be dissuaded by either the danger of the climb or the sounds of a ship being prepped for sea coming from the opening.

Map A (Cross Section of Stronghold)



Map B (The Stronghold Area) 1 hex = 100 feet



The front door entrance is a bronze door which is locked (rank 10). If the characters have the ring from the dwarf, they will be able to place it into an indentation in the door which will open it.

VI. The Levels of the Stronghold

Each room is described in the following manner: first the room number is given, then the ceiling height, then the status of the main entrance into the room (open, closed, etc.), then a visual *description* for the characters, and then *comments* with information only for the GM. All this information is augmented by any information found on the maps such as door lock rank, furniture, etc.

If any monsters are present, their characteristics are described followed by their weapons and spells. The weapon information is presented as **Initiative Value/Strike Chance/Damage.** The spell information is **Rank/Cast** chance.

1. LEVEL 1

Room 1. Ceiling Height: 20 feet.

Description: This rocky chamber is a rough-hewn cave filled with various garbage, driftwood, pelts, bright trinkets, roots, grass, etc. In the southwest corner, the party sees two gleaming eyes staring out at them, followed by two smaller eyes appearing below the first pair.

Comments: This is the lair of a **mountain gorilla** and her young child; she will viciously defend her young to the death. Her characteristics are as follows:

PS: 35 **MD:** 20 **AG:** 14 **MA:** 0
EN: 28 **FT:** 33 **WP:** 8 **PC:** 16
PB: 4 **TMR:** 7 **NA:** 3 DP
Bite: 26/50%/−2
Rend: 26/70%/+6 (only in Close Combat)

The gorilla has collected a group of bright baubles with which to amuse her child — one of which is a rough diamond, worth 3,000 silver pennies. To find it, the characters must actively search through the garbage. If a Beast Master specializing in Common Land Mammals is in the party, her attack instinct may be mollified to a neutral reaction by rolling less than or equal to 5 times the Beast Master's Rank (he is trying to calm her down).

Room 2. Ceiling Height: 15 feet.

Description: A simple carved out hallway with small pools of water in potholes in the rough-hewn floor as indicated. It slopes slightly down; approximately 1 inch in 20 inches. There is a wooden door at the eastern end of the chamber with a large **S** carved into the metal banding.

Comments: Above the door is carved in very small letters into the stone "Here lies the Stronghold of Socantri the Snake: Beware!" The language is up to the GM.

Room 3. Ceiling Height: 20 feet. Door: Locked.

Description: The western wall is the only wall which is not paneled with wooden timbers, thus giving the entire space a certain warmth. However, this is belied by the fact that a corpse with a plumed hat on his head is resting comfortably at the table. In front of him is a parchment with writing on it in the same tongue as on the door; it describes a shipment arriving from a southern island for Socantri, and when that shipment will arrive. Payment was to be in the form of lotus plants. The door on the northern wall is ajar.

Comments: The chests (locked with a Rank 0 lock) on the south wall are boobytrapped; each will release a paralyzing gas (created by a Rank 5 Alchemist) once opened; inside each are half a dozen, small, potted lotus plants which were to be used as payment. The pools in this room are slightly acidic; they will discolor the footwear of anything which steps in them. The Pirate at the table appears undamaged when viewed from the front but if examined from the rear, his heart has been torn out through his back.

Room 4. Ceiling Height: 10 feet. Door: Ajar.

Description: The hallway is lined with hooks on the walls. The torch holders all contain burnt-out torches.

Comments: The secret door in the western wall (leading to area 4a) can only be opened and found by a thief. Behind that door is a short hall which has a covered pit near its end; a perception roll (Difficulty Factor of 3) is required to avoid falling in for the first character to encounter it. The pit is 20 feet deep. The chests at the end of the chamber each contain a tin of dried-up paint. If the paints are taken and returned to any Scholar, it will be revealed that these are pigments of a great, long dead artist who lived 1,000 years ago. They will be incredibly valuable, and the individual who found them will be treated as a hero by the academic community. The hooks on the wall of area 4 were used to hang pictures. Socantri loved that artist and used to display his works regularly. All the paintings are gone from the walls.

Room 5. Ceiling Height: 30 feet.

Description: A large gallery, with floor covered with dried blood and grime. There are many torch holders along the walls and two closed doors on the south wall.

Comments: Inhabiting this room are one dozen **rats** which will come out of the concealed opening in the northwest corner once the party is inside the room. Their characteristics are:

PS: 5 **MD:** 20 **AG:** 20 **MA:** 0
EN: 2 **FT:** 3 **WP:** 16 **PC:** 20
PB: 5 **TMR:** 2 **NA:** 0
Bite: 40/95%/−5 (only in Close Combat)

There is an additional 20% chance of infection from a rat bite and a 10% chance of disease. The pools in this room are acidic as in room 3, and if a character has stepped in both pools (the GM must keep track of who has stepped in which), the footwear will begin to deteriorate. The rats come from the hall which runs alongside this room. If the characters actually go back there, they will be attacked by 100 rats (dumb, dumb!). The door on the south wall is unlocked but closed, as is the door at the end of the hallway.

Room 6. Ceiling Height: 10 feet.

Description: Simply a downward sloping hall (1 inch in 10 inches) which is very slippery (rat excrement, dampness, dried blood, etc.); each character must make a one-time roll versus 2 times Agility to avoid falling as he moves down this hall.

Room 7. Ceiling Height: 25 feet. Door: Closed and locked.

Description: A room which might have once been a library. It is very dusty, as if it has been boarded up for a long time. There is a fireplace in the northwest corner and cabinets on the east and west walls. In the cabinets, scattered around, are some pens and pieces of parchment.

Comments: There is a very strong high-mana "aura" about this room; the entire party, especially any Adepts, will be aware of it. Any means of detecting the mana will register *low* mana. The discrepency is disturbing, as well it should be. The wizard Valdak (an enemy of Socantri's) was killed in this room. He cursed this room when he died and anyone who enters it will lose 10% of his hearing; every day thereafter he will lose 10% more until he is totally deaf. Only a *remove curse* will cure this malediction. For every 20% of hearing lost, the character will also lose 1 point of Perception.

Room 8. Ceiling Height: 30 feet. Door: Unlocked but closed.

Description: The wine cellar. The walls of this room are very clean and the entire area appears almost spotless. In the southern section chairs and tables are stored with various other accouterments for the entertaining of guests. The racks are filled with bottles of wine. There are pools of water surrounding the staircase in the northwest corner. The floor there is very rough and the water has settled.

Comments: Located at random throughout the many old bottles of wine are two special bottles — rare southern vino which would fetch 2,000 silver pennies on the open market. In addition to the two good bottles, there are forty others which are full. The pools will do no harm to anyone except that the water is slimy and stagnant, and if it gets into any wound, it will increase the chance of infection by 20%. The water is running down the stairs.

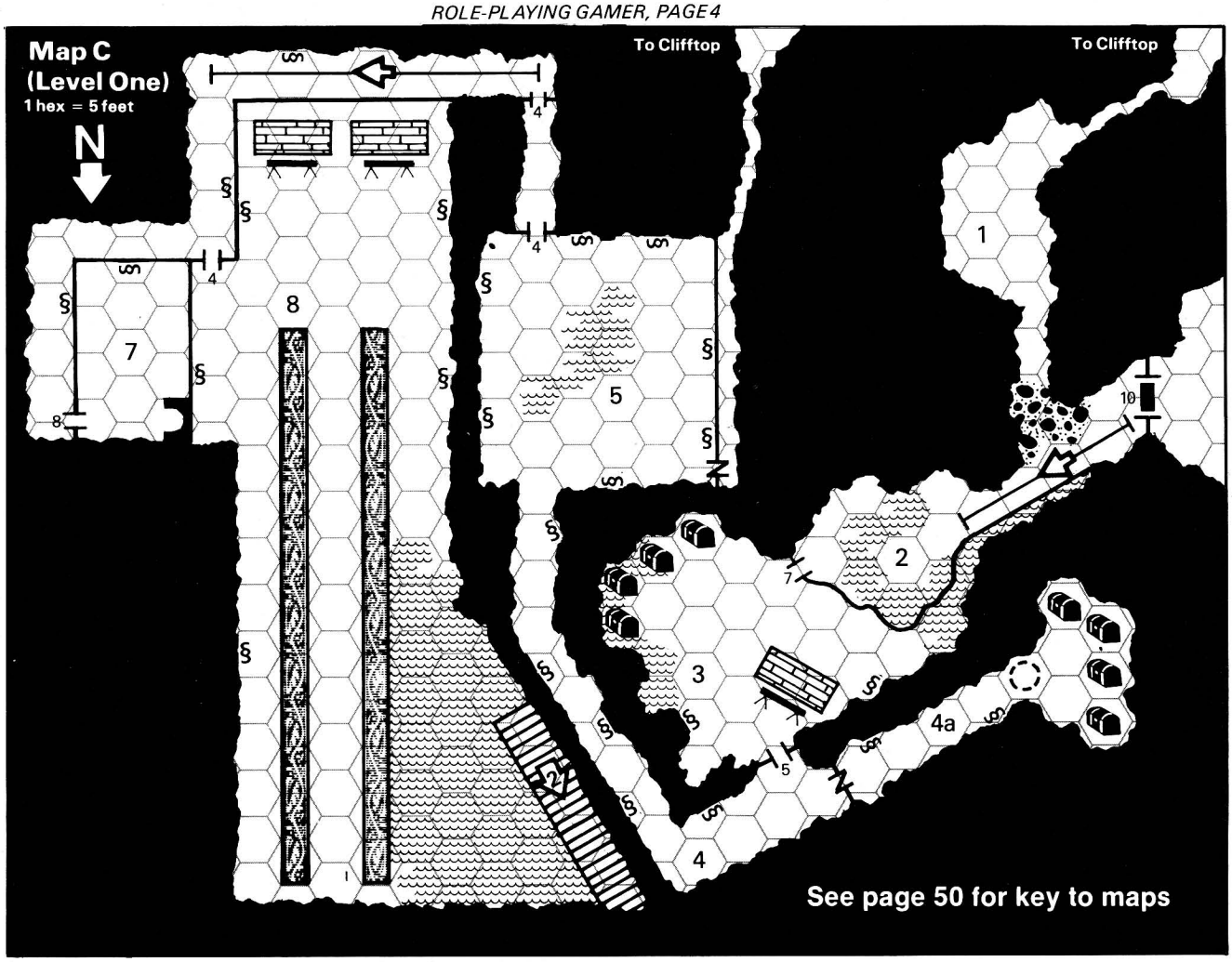
2. LEVEL 2

Room 9. Ceiling Height: 15 feet.

Description: Just an empty chamber with some stagnant water in the southern corner.

Comments: The secret door in the southeast wall cannot be seen without the skills of a Thief. The water is running down the stairs from above.

Room 10. Ceiling Height: 15 feet.
Door: Open.


Map C
(Level One)
1 hex = 5 feet
N
To Clifftop
To Clifftop
1
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4a
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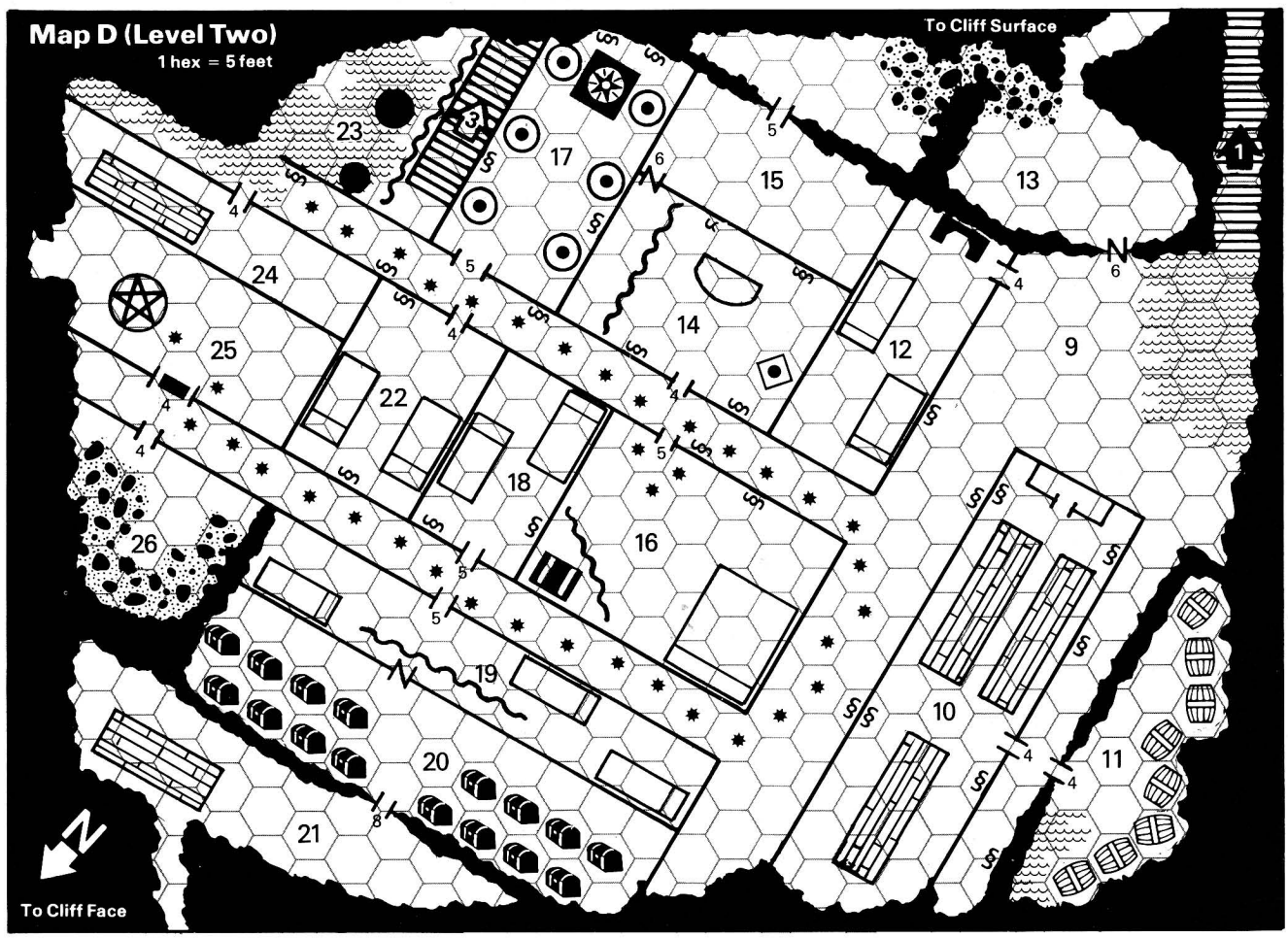
8
10
See page 50 for key to maps


Map D (Level Two)
1 hex = 5 feet
To Cliff Surface
To Cliff Face
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Description: There are three tables in this dining room, with a meal prepared and served on the tables. The food is cold. Sitting at various chairs are five pirates, each dead and having a look of great terror on his face. Some of the plates on the tables and in the cabinet on the south wall are broken.

Comments: Each character should be allowed one roll versus 3 × PC to discern that the corner of the southern table near the door has great scratch marks on it, as if something with five sharp points had been dragged across it for a short distance. (It was the hand of a man trying to hang on and not be dragged away.)

Room 11. Ceiling Height: 8 feet. Door: Closed but unlocked.

Description: A rough-hewn room full of barrels. There is a very musky smell in here. One of the barrels has leaked (it has cracked) and water is leaking out. There appears to be some signs of a struggle in this room.

Comments: In amongst the barrels is an **asp.** Its characteristics are as follows:

PS:	3	**MD:**	0	**AG:**	19	**MA:**	0
EN:	2	**FT:**	4	**WP:**	18	**PC:**	17
PB:	8	**TMR:**	3	**NA:**	0		

Bite: 36/65%/D − 3 (any effective damage introduces poison; 2DP per pulse until dead or antidote applied).

Any investigation by the characters will cause the asp to be disturbed, and it will attack the closest character and then disappear back into the shadows.

Room 12. Ceiling Height: 10 feet. Door: Locked.

Description: By all appearances a bedroom belonging to Socantri's second in command. The west wall has a mural of a sea combat between a pirate ship and a sea serpent. There are two beds, a stool, a chest of drawers, and a fireplace on the southern wall.

Comments: Nothing here of interest.

Room 13. Ceiling Height: 18 feet.

Description: A rough-hewn cave, with wooden pillars along the northern wall to hold it up. It looks very tenuous. The floor is filled with very small bones and dung.

Comments: This is the lair of a **Wyvern,** whose characteristics are:

PS:	25	**MD:**	11	**AG:**	14	**MA:**	9
EN:	30	**FT:**	35	**WP:**	13	**PC:**	20
PB:	4	**TMR:**	1/3	**NA:**	8 DP		

Tail: 34/56%/4DP per pulse for D5 pulses
Bite: 34/51%/+4 (Melee or Close Combat; Shield attack with Tail)

The Wyvern will be curious to see what the party has in store; if the party runs away, he will follow them while they explore the stronghold. If anyone can communicate with him, he will be glad to assist the party. If attacked by anyone, he will viciously defend himself. The secret door on the northwest wall requires a 2 × PC roll to be discovered from this side if the character is not a Thief. The rock pile in the southeast corner can be moved and then climbed, allowing egress into the other chamber (which is plain) and leads to room 15. That door is locked and ranked as indicated.

Room 14. Ceiling Height: 10 feet. Door: Open.

Description: An office by appearances. A wood paneled room, filled with fairly clean furniture, a nice desk, chairs, etc. Against the western wall is the pedestal for a statue, with no statue there. Pulling aside the curtain on the east side will reveal the rest of the room.

Comments: This is Socranti's personal room, and the desk is filled with various papers detailing his pirating in the last few months, including an account of his encounter with the sponsor's ship (language up to the GM's discretion). The secret door is locked and ranked as indicated. There is no indication at all in this room that Socantri is an Adept.

Room 15. Ceiling Height: 10 feet. Door: Locked.

Description: This is plainly a weapons storeroom. The walls are rough hewn and covered with weapons racks. The weapons are all neatly arranged.

Comments: Every kind of weapon listed in the Weapons Chart is here. Also included are *one each* of every type, crafted in a superior fashion (doing +1 damage, +3 to Base Chance, and worth 10 times the price of a normal weapon). Every character has a chance, if he carefully searches, to find one of these weapons equal to 10 times his Rank with that weapon. Each character gets one roll only, and it should be done by the GM. The "secret" door is visible to anyone who rolls less than or equal to 5 times his Perception, or is obvious if that area is examined. It is not locked from this side.

Room 16. Ceiling Height: 10 feet. Door: Open.

Description: A bedroom, and a very opulent one at that. There is a dead, naked human female with a terrified expression lying on the bed. She is not wounded. She lies as though petrified, staring blankly at the doorway. The door is wide open. The curtain in the northeast corner is rent.

Comments: This is where Samigina found Socantri, in a compromising position, and dragged him, screaming and slightly bloodied from here to room 25. There is some coinage scattered on the floor behind the curtain, which conceals a safe that has been smashed open. Outside, in the hallway, there are blood marks along the floor headed west and around the corner.

Room 17. Ceiling Height: 18 feet. Door: Locked.

Description: There are six pillars, each fluted with alternating bands of red, green, and blue. The floor and walls are masoned stone, painted flat black. At the south end there is an altar made out of white marble, stained ever so slightly a dull pink. Behind the altar is a gutter and a drain, showing the signs of bloodletting.

Comments: There is an aura of high mana in this room. This is a temple where Socantri often performed sacrifices to the various demons he summoned. The GM should play this one up big, and hope to use it as a time-waster.

Room 18. Ceiling Height: 10 feet. Door: Open.

Description: This is a bedroom, stone walled, with three beds and one chest. All the furniture is totally torn apart and destroyed; there is a great deal of spattered blood lying around, matted with the hair of mule, which a Beast Master has a (10 × Rank) chance of identifying.

Comments: Samigina was in this room, taking the occupants and disposing of them downstairs. One of the pirates was rather plucky and managed to engage the demon. Under one of the mattresses is a silver short sword.

Room 19. Ceiling Height: 10 feet. Door: Open.

Description: A large bedroom, with three beds and one divan. The small desk on the south wall has some parchment in the drawers, with some quills and ink wells (filled). There is a rack in front of the curtain which has three spears in it. The curtain is drawn back, revealing the secret door which is slightly ajar. There are some human bones lying about in pools of flesh, brains, and blood. Also scattered on the floor are some sabers.

Comments: Samigina was here, along with some skeletons. There was a melee in this room, and one of the pirates attempted to escape through the secret door.

Room 20. Ceiling Height: 6 feet. Door: Open.

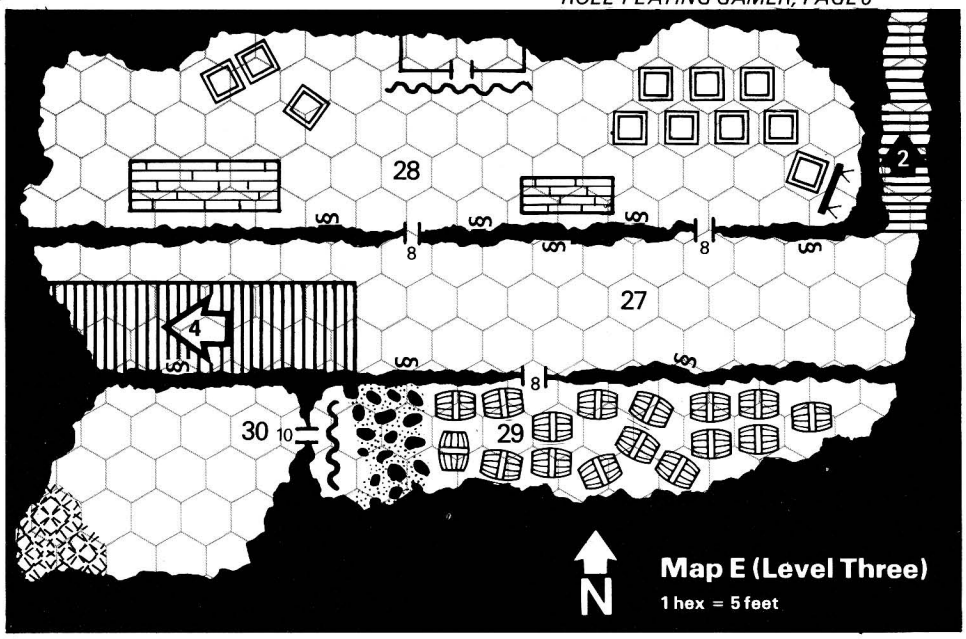
Description: A rough-hewn room with 16 chests overturned and the coinage inside spilled all over the floor. Also spilled all over the floor are the remains of a pirate female, wearing leather armor, armed with a saber, and holding a small sack in her hand. The body is face down, with its back burned and charred. There are great scorch marks on the walls.

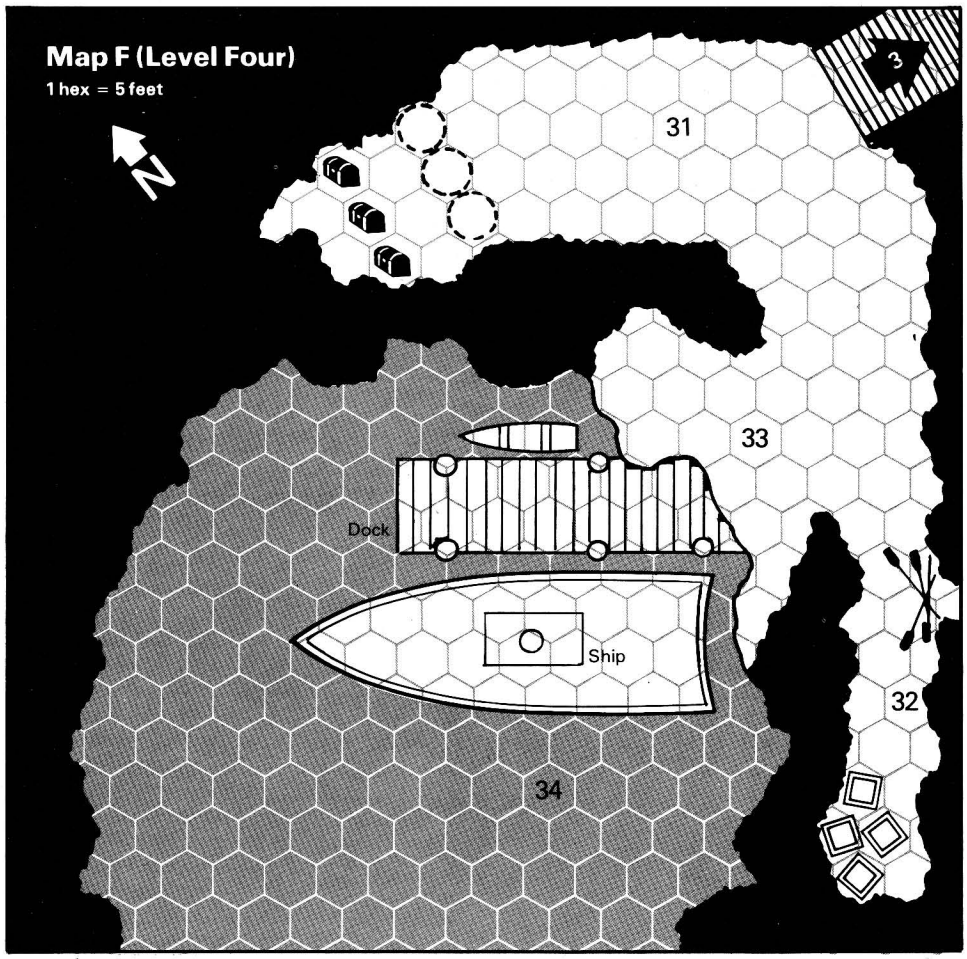
Comments: The coinage on the floor amounts to 141 silver pennies, 67 gold shillings, 7 true-silver guineas, and 546 copper farthings. The face of the female is contorted in fear. The sack contains three potion bottles: one **Healing** (10 damage points healed); one **Walk Unseen** (duration 2 hours); and one **Armor of Earth** (1 hour, −18%). The saber is enchanted to Rank 3.

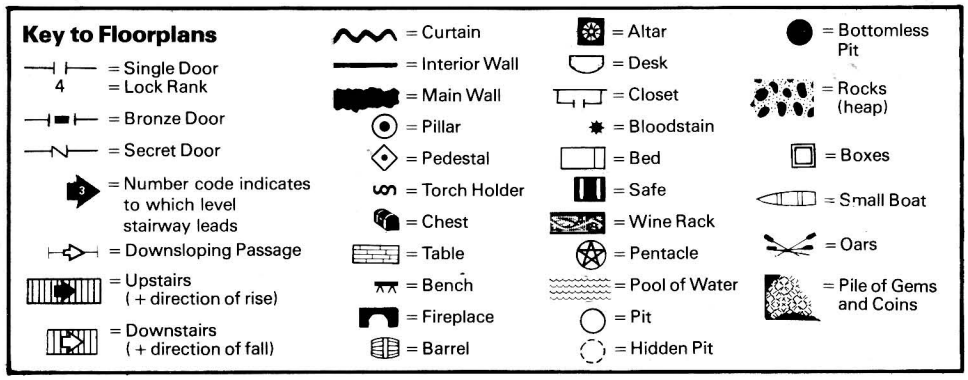
Room 21. Ceiling Height: 4 feet. Door: Locked.

Description: This room is very odd. Even though the door to this room is normal size, the ceiling inside is only 4 feet high. There is a strong, foul reek in the air, and a slight breeze strikes the face of any character who stands in the doorway. There are some tables and chairs stored in the northeast corner, which is in shadows even in direct torchlight. There are racks on the south wall.

Comments: If any character ventures into the room, he will be attacked by the **Giant Spider** (see Section VII) who will not be seen because it is using one of its spells. The spider will attack any size party and will fight to the death, using its spells to its best advantage. Its lair is in the tunnel, and in there the party will find two spider eggs worth 200 silver pennies on the open market. The spider will attempt to force the encounter in the cramped room, where any character except a halfling fights at a −25 due to the ceiling height. If that situation is impossible, it will take the







fight to the group (which may happen anyway due to the fact the party member who ran into the thing may have run away in fright) and use its area spells to tie up as many members as possible. If it reaches a point where it can carry one member off into the lair, it will do so to devour him at its leisure. The GM should choose the characteristics and spells of the spider based on the strength of the party.

Room 22. Ceiling Height: 10 feet. Door: Locked.

Description: A bedroom, with two beds, two small chests, and two torch holders. These beds are untouched and clean.

Comments: Nothing of interest here.

Room 23. Ceiling Height: 10 feet. Door: Open.

Description: A rough-hewn room, with a heavy curtain running along the west wall. The floor is very rough, and the water covers three fourths of it. Partially obscured by the water is a small statue lying along the south wall. The water does not reach the curtain.

Comments: There are two pits which allow the water generated by a spring at the east end of the exterior hallway to drain to the ocean. The wall there has been partially destroyed recently. Any character falling into these pits with any armor heavier than leather must make a roll versus the average of PS and AG (difficulty factor applied by GM depending on weight carried, etc.) or slowly sink. Pulling back the curtain will reveal the staircase, with bloodstains heading downward. The statue is that of the sponsor's daughter in Briefing #1.

Room 24. Ceiling Height: 30 feet. Door: Locked.

Description: A carpenter's workshop, filled with woods, tools, etc. Very clean and well kept. It contains tools for the working of ships.

Comments: A Mechanician should be able to construct a dam for the water in the hall to prevent it from filling room 23, thus slowly revealing the drains

Room 25. Ceiling Height: 25 feet. Door: Ajar.

Description: The door to this room is bronze. There are the props of summoning on the table against the west wall (silvered broadsword, cap, miter, girdle of lion's skin, etc.). A pentacle and triangle are drawn in colored chalks on the floor.

Comments: This was Socantri's summoning room. One of Socantri's fellow pirates was an adept of Lesser Summoning, so the door is *warded* against any unauthorized human intrusions with a Spell of Summoning Summonable (Rank 15). In three minutes, a **Hellhound** will arrive at the door, and attack the party. It has the following charactristics:

PS: 16 **MD:** 21 **AG:** 22 **MA:** 20
EN: 11 **FT:** 22 **WP:** 19 **PC:** 30
PB: 4 **TMR:** 9 **NA:** 6 DP
Bite: 52/86%/+6 (Close Combat only)
Breath: 20 feet by 10 feet; D+8
Magic: Sorceries of the Mind
S-1 (Spell of Mental Attack) 10/75%
S-8 (Spell of Invisibility) 5/35%

This is the room where Samigina dragged Socantri after he was discovered, and there are blood stains inside this room and in the hallway outside.

Room 26. Ceiling Height: 10 feet. Door: Locked.

Description: A rough-hewn room with a number of fairly large boulders strewn about on the floor; there is also some sort of slime which covers the floor.

Comments: None, a time-waster. The pirates were planning to clear out this chamber at some future date but had not gotten around to it. Now they never will.

3. LEVEL 3

Room 27. Ceiling Height: 15 feet. Door: Open.

Description: A fifteen-foot wide corridor with a staircase at the extreme western end. If the party is not using a torch, they will notice a very slight blue-green glow coming up the stairs (also they will hear the sounds of a ship being prepped for departure). The hall has stone walls and torch holders running its length. The floor is clean and not dusty, but there does seem to be a dark stain which runs the length of the floor leading from the staircase to staircase. The doors on either side are open.

Comments: The stain is where Samigina had his skeletons drag some bodies downstairs.

Room 28. Ceiling Height: 15 feet. Door: Closed but not locked.

Description: A rough-hewn chamber with many boxes strewn about, some half-opened, others totally closed. One would get the impression that some one or thing went through all the boxes in here in a hasty search. The boxes contain food stuffs, clothing, supplies, and the like.

Comments: There is essentially nothing of interest in here, except behind the curtain on the north wall. If the party pulls it open, they will find hanging in a clothes closet a dead human body, eyes wide with fear (possibly died of heart failure).

Room 29. Ceiling Height: 7 feet. Door: Locked.

Description: This rough-hewn room is filled with barrels of many sizes and shapes, including casks of liquid. Towards the western end of the room is a high pile of rocks in front of a floor-to-ceiling curtain.

Comments: Inside the barrels are such things as **wax, muslin,** woods of various sorts, dried fruits, camel's hair, wool, rope, wire, felt, fertilizers, matting, paper, lace, blubber, etc. The GM should be very creative as to the contents, so long as he is sure to mention the two items that are in bold print, since they may prove to be important. Behind the curtain (the distance between is 2½ feet) is a wall with a door which is slightly ajar.

Room 30. Ceiling Height: 25 feet. Door: Ajar.

Description: The room is a rough-hewn chamber. A literal *pile* of gems and coinage lies in the extreme southwest corner. There is a slight mist in the air (which should clearly be attributed by the GM to the party's torch if they have one). On the floor in the middle of the room is a dead pirate, lying face down on the floor, 20 feet from the door. He is holding something in his hand; it is a very small item. He appears to have been heading towards the door when he fell.

Comments: The pirate came in here to get a ring which he knew to be stored in this treasure trove room; it has two charges of the Special Knowledge Counterspell of Greater Summoning at Rank 0. It takes a character with an MA of 17 or over to use it.

Once any living being moves over the threshold of the room, the mist will slowly begin to congeal (the GM should immediately go to the Tactical Display upon anyone voicing the desire to enter). It will take the **Mist Demon** (see Section VII) three Pulses (including the Pulse in which someone crossed the threshold) to congeal, which it will do as close to living beings as possible. It will attack until either destroyed, dispelled, or all living beings are dead or have left. It will attempt to maneuver itself between anyone in the room and the door, attacking all the while. A magical wind-based attack done while it is in its mist-form will delay the congealing by two Pulses. The GM should choose the characteristics of the demon based on the strength of the party.

If a parafin torch is constructed by using the wax, muslin and wood from room 29, it will take 10 Pulses to build, have a BC of 60%, and do 2D damage.

The treasure contained in the trove includes the following: 1,978 gold shillings; 936 true-silver guineas; 73,859 copper farthings; 743 silver pennies; seven random gems (a Black Star Beryl, a Jacinth, a Ruby, a Olivine, Jet, a Rubellite Tourmaline); and a wolf-skin cloak with a bone clasp (possibly a magical item; GM's discretion).

4. LEVEL 4

Room 31. Ceiling Height: 25

Description: This is an empty, sand-filled chamber with 3 chests in the extreme northern end. There are 12 human bodies lying on the sand in the area south of the covered pit. All of these bodies are garbed in leather armor and the clothing of pirates. Some bodies are naked, and all have had their weapons taken away. None of the bodies are located north of the covered pit. There is a blue-green glow coming from the opening to the west.

Comments: The covered pit is a trap which is covered with leaves and sand to fool the unwary. It was set there by the pirates to guard their treasure until it was transported upstairs. Along the western edge there is a slight cliff which enables anyone to go over to the chests without disturbing the trap. If the trap is stepped on, characters must attempt to roll equal to or less than 3 times their Agility or else they fall into it, dropping 20 or so feet. There will be enough leaves and fronds to allow any character to climb out once fallen in, but it will take at least ten Pulses (disregarding any time spent trying to recover from stun if that occurs). The GM should fill the chests with as much treasure as he sees fit.

Room 32. Ceiling Height: 25 feet. Door: Open.

Description: This is a long, narrow passage filled with various tools and accouterments of sailing and ship maintenance. All of the things which are in here are of no interest to the party, with one exception: a small mule which is bending over the body of a man who appears to be as dead as the others in this area (it is Socantri, who is dead). This mule is located in one of the hexes next to the oars on the southern wall. There is a great amount of gems and jewelry lying in open sacks at the feet of this mule (which was gotten from various chests around the stronghold).

Comments: This mule is not what he appears to be, he is **Samigina,** the Marquis of Dead Souls, a *demon.* His characteristics are:

PS: 25 **MD:** 5 **AG:** 20 **MA:** 30
EN: 30 **FT:** 40 **WP:** 30 **PC:** 32
PB: 10 **TMR:** 7 **NA:** 4 DP
Bite: 62/95%/+2 (Close Combat)
Hooves: 62/95%/+4 (Close Combat)
Hooves: 62/85%/+4 (Melee Combat)
Spells: Necromantic Conjurations, Rank 20.
G-1 (Darkness) 99%
G-4 (Fire and Brimstone) 85%
G-7 (Noxious Vapors) 75%
S-3 (Wall of Bones) 95%
S-5 (Mass Fear) 75%
S-7 (Animate Dead) 85%
S-10 (Hand of Death) 70%

Samigina is here to procure this vessel for a trip across the seas. He has raised his army of skeletons and attacked this pirate hideout, wiping out the entire force, and is now readying his vessel. If attacked by a party, he will first pick out the leader and cast a Hand of Death for just one Pulse in an effort to scare them off. If that does not work, he will animate the 23 dead pirate corpses as Zombies and have them attack the party while he is casting spells such as Mass Fear and Fire and Brimstone. If the party appears to be winning, he will then pull the skeletons in room 34 off the ship and have them attack the party.

Samigina does not wish to get involved in a Melee of any sort and will move quickly to avoid the possibility. Samigina in the mule form is able to loose a spell without preparing it and does not have to make any of the hand motions normally associated with spells of his College. Thus, the GM should strive to maintain the illusion that the mule is not performing the magic, since there will be no outward signs at all (no vocals, etc.). Only if Samigina uses the Fire and Brimstone will they directly notice anything since the flames will emanate from the mule's eyes.

If any attempt to mentally communicate with the mule is successful, the GM will have to play the mule as a superintelligent being and hope the players catch on that this is no ordinary animal. He will attempt to convince the party to leave and go back upstairs since he wishes to kill no more than he has to, but he will willingly oblige them if they persist in being aggressive. The only communication possible will be telepathic, as are all animal/human communications.

If things are going badly, Samigina will attempt to leave via the stairs. He can be banished by casting the appropriate counterspell. The real trick of this battle for the play-

ers is to realize that this animal is not what he appears to be and the GM must play the demon to the hilt for it to be effective.

Room 33. Ceiling Height: 25 feet.

Description: Ths area is filled with 10 dead human bodies all with leather armor and the clothing of pirates. Some of the bodies are naked, but all have been bereft of their weapons. This area is covered with sand, and the blood spilt by the dead men stains the pearly white beach.

Comments: All of these men and the men in room 31 (scattered randomly about; GM's discretion as to their placement) may be animated as **Zombies** by Samigina if the party does not heed his warning to leave. Their characteristics are as follows:

PS: 16	**MD:** 10	**AG:** 8	**MA:** 0
EN: 22	**FT:** 25	**WP:** 25	**PC:** 8
PB: 2	**TMR:** 3	**NA:** 4 (due to the leather)	

Hands: 16/21%/D−2

Room 34. Ceiling Height: 25 feet.

Description: A large grotto which is filled with an eerie, fell, blue-green light. There is a wharf with a small ship docked. It is in the process of being prepped for sea, with the entire crew bedecked as if pirates. There is one major difference between the sailors and what the characters would expect, however, as these are all **Skeletons.** The ship has two masts and rigging, etc., and the Skeletons fill out her entire crew. The inlet looks quite deep.

Comments: The entire crew has been animated by Samigina as he prepares for his voyage. The 25 **Skeletons** have the following characteristics:

PS: 16	**MD:** 18	**AG:** 16	**MA:** 0
EN: 12	**FT:** 10	**WP:** 25	**PC:** 14
PB: 2	**TMR:** 3	**NA:** 0	

Saber: 30/78%/+3

They will not be used to attack the party unless things are going badly in the melee, as Samigina needs them to finish their tasks and believes the Zombies can finish the party off.

The walls are covered with a lichen-type plant which gives off the very strange iridescent light. The inlet is 40 feet deep. The ship is quite sea-worthy, which any character with a Navigator skill would know. There is no form of treasure aboard the vessel.

VII. New Monsters

There are two monsters presented in the adventure which will not be found in the *DragonQuest* rules. They are detailed below:

5. GIANT SPIDER

NATURAL HABITAT: Caves, Crypts, Ruins

FREQUENCY: Very Rare NUMBER: 1–2 (1)

DESCRIPTION: A large, man-sized spider with a thick coating of long, greasy hair. The hair and the fetid skin beneath are mottled shades of green and brown. Their eyes are large and fly-like and bespeak of hidden intelligence. They are one-hex monsters.

TALENTS, SKILLS AND MAGIC: These creatures are masters of Earth Magics, having ranks with their various spells (of both General and Special Knowledge) and talents not exceeding 15. They do not possess any ritual knowledge. When they perform their magic, they do not need to make any gestures or vocalize the words (the preparation is done in total silence). They are not web-spinners but create their lairs in caves. Their eggs are worth 200–2000 silver pennies on the open market (depending on size).

MOVEMENT RATES: Running 250

PS: 14–23	**MD:** 10–14	**AG:** 30–34
MA: 15–20	**EN:** 7–16	**FT:** 13–22
WP: 20–24	**PC:** 9–13	**PB:** 1–5
TMR: 5	**NA:** Hair absorbs 3 DP	

WEAPONS: A giant spider can attack only via its bite in either Close or Melee Combat, with a Base Chance of 55% and damage of +2. Its bite is not poisonous.

COMMENTS: A Giant Spider belongs to the Insects and Spiders family (Section 69).

6. MIST DEMON

NATURAL HABITAT: Other Planes

FREQUENCY: Very Rare NUMBER: 1

DESCRIPTION: A mist demon is a misshapen, malformed, degenerate Air Elemental which only appears on this plane in the form of a light mist which has the color and consistency of smoke. When provoked to attack, it will congeal to form a semi-solid, slowly revolving whirlwind. It will appear to have a number of faces equal to the number of creatures it is attacking. It is a three hex monster.

TALENTS, SKILLS AND MAGIC: Mist demons have no special magical talents, and no other abilities except their multiple attacks as detailed below.

MOVEMENT RATES: Running 150

PS: 42–51	**MD:** 0	**AG:** 33–42
MA: 0	**EN:** 25–34	**FT:** 20–29
WP: 10–14	**PC:** 10–14	**PB:** 0
TMR: 3	**NA:** 0	

WEAPONS: Mist demons attack by strangulation (Base Chance of 70%, +7 damage) and may attack in either Melee or Close Combat. Each surrounding hex may be attacked into (all are treated as front hexsides) and up to six figures may be attacked in one Pulse with no penalty.

COMMENTS: This creature belongs to the summonables family (Section 73). It can be dispelled by a Special Knowledge Counterspell of Lesser Summoning.

VIII. Designer's Notes

The Treasure of Socantri is an adventure which was designed to test not only the abilities of the characters, but also the knowledge (of *DragonQuest*) the players themselves had. Since most of the people who play *DQ* have either played the game since its release or know the existing rules fairly well, I wanted to send the characters on an adventure which they would assume to be straightforward and transparent, and then find themselves in situations with which they are not familiar while encountering creatures which are not in their rules books. Because of this, the performance of the characters will widely vary from having no trouble with the adventure at all to being totally wiped out (both situations occurred in playthroughs during testing).

At the 1981 WinterCon (and also at a small convention in Chicago over the New Year's Holiday) we had some groups tell us this adventure was too easy; others complained that *DragonQuest* adventures should not be so dangerous because that reminded them too much of the bad things about *D&D.* Obviously, the adventure is not quite the culprit, but rather the player's own abilities and knowledge.

I chose *Samigina* specifically because he/she/it does not look like a demon; someone like Aim, for example, would have been too easy for the players to recognize and react to. It is important to emphasize that the GM should not play Samigina as a mindless, killing automaton, but rather as a being who sees choices and reacts intelligently to them. The demon will not be worried about the characters' intrusion unless they begin to threaten his operation; in that case, he will attempt to kill as many of the party as he can, then animate them for his own purposes.

In my campaign, one of the characters (Whis'par) was killed by Samigina almost immediately after hostilities broke out. She was then animated by Samigina and proceeded to attack Arlo with her saber. The reaction of the players to this sudden turn of events was priceless; the image of a burned-to-a-crisp (from Hellfire) Whis'par mindlessly flailing away at Arlo turned the stomach of even the most battle-hardened veteran of my campaign. Do not get the wrong idea; I normally do not enjoy upsetting the digestive systems of my players. However, a GM must keep his players on their toes.

A reminder about demons in general is in order: They may be banished back to their own dimension by a successful cast of a Special Knowledge Counterspell of Greater Summoning. Thus, if one of the characters has this spell, then all it takes to defeat Samigina is the realization that he/she/it is a demon and the casting of the counterspell. Samigina will passively resist this attempt; after all, he does have ideas of his own for the future on this plane.

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* = Killed in Action

Production:
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Feedback Questions

Ares™ Magazine, Winter, 1983

How to Use the Feedback Response Card: After you have finished reading this issue of *Ares*™ Magazine, please read the Feedback questions below, and give us your answers by writing the answer numbers on the card in the response boxes which correspond to each question number. The feedback card is stapled into the magazine.

The Feedback section is an important means for us to learn your interests and opinions both on the contents of the current magazine issue and on future materials and games that may appear in the magazine or as separate boxed items. The editorial content of the magazines is directly affected by reader response. We invite you to participate in this, our regular survey of readers.

What the numbers mean: When answering the questions, a "0" response always means NO OPINION or NOT APPLICABLE. When the question is a "yes" or "no" question, a response of "1" means YES and a "2" means NO. When the question is a rating question, a response of "1" is the WORST rating, a "2" is a POOR rating, a "3" is an AVERAGE rating, a "4" is a GOOD rating, and a "5" is the BEST rating. Please be sure to answer all questions (but do not write anything in the box for the question-numbers labelled "no question"). Incompletely filled-out cards can not be processed.

Please Note: TSR Hobbies uses a 1 to 5 scale for its surveys. Readers should not use the former 1 to 9 rating scale or the response card will be invalid.

1-3. No question

The following questions ask you to rate the articles in this issue on a scale of 1 (poor) through 5 (excellent); 0 = no opinion.

4. DAMOCLES MISSION™ Game
5. Damocles Mission (story)
6. The Space Shuttle
7. StarTrader Game Enhanced
8. The Treasure of Socantri (adventure)
9. Questing
10. Universe CommLink
11. Science for Science Fiction
12. Facts for Fantasy
13. Media
14. Games (reviews)
15. Software (reviews)
16. RP Gaming (review)
17. Books (reviews)
18. Film & Television (reviews)
19. Muse
20. Issue cover
21. This issue overall

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

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

24. Do you now subscribe to *Ares* Magazine? 1 = Yes; 2 = No.

25. Your age: 0 = 10 years old or younger; 1 = 11-14; 2 = 15-18; 3 = 19-22; 4 = 23-29; 5 = 30 years or older.

26. Education: 0 = 8 years or less; 1 = 9-11 years; 2 = 12 years; 3 = 13-15 years; 4 = 16 years; 5 = 17 years or more.

27. What is the average number of time you spend each month playing simulation games? 0 = none; 1 = once or twice; 2 = 3-6 times; 3 = 7-9 times; 4 = 10-15 times; 5 = 16 or more times

28. How long have you been playing simulation games? 0 = less than a year; 1 = 1 year; 2 = 2-3 years; 3 = 4-6 years; 4 = 7-9 years; 5 = 10 or more years.

29. How many simulation games (of all publishers) do you possess? 1 = 1-20; 2 = 21-40; 3 = 41-60; 4 = 61-80; 5 = 81 or more.

30. What level of complexity do you prefer in your simulation games? Rate your preference on a 1 to 5 scale, using the following games as guidelines: 1 = THE CREATURE THAT ATE SHEBOYGAN™ game; 2 = RAGNAROK™ game; 3 = STAR FORCE™ game; 4 = ALBION: LAND OF FAERIE™ game; 5 = BATTLEFLEET: MARS™ game.

Questions 31 through 38 ask you to rank your interest in reading various subgenres of science fiction. Use the following scale: 0 = no interest at all; 1 = very little interest; 2 = limited interest; 3 = average interest; 4 = great interest; 5 = extreme interest.

31. Space opera/science fantasy
32. "Hard" science fiction adventure
33. Problem-solving "hard" science fiction
34. Extraterrestrial societies
35. Future societies (utopia/dystopia)
36. Alternate history
37. Time-travel
38. Soft science fiction (aka "New Wave")

Questions 39 through 46 ask you to rate your interest in science fiction games. Use the same rating scale as for questions 31 through 38.

39. Strategic space combat
40. Tactical space combat (ship to ship)
41. Strategic planet-bound conflict (army against army)
42. Tactical planet-bound conflict (man against man)
43. Alternate history conflict
44. Conflict in a near future setting
45. Economic/sociological/political conflict
46. Role-playing adventure

47. Which statement best describes your feeling about the future editorial direction of *Ares* Magazine? 1 = The magazine should be devoted to science fiction boardgames only (excluding all fantasy and role-playing materials); 2 = It should be devoted to science fiction and fantasy boardgames (excluding all role-playing materials); 3 = It should be devoted to science fiction games of any kind (excluding all fantasy materials); 4 = It should be devoted to all science fiction and fantasy games, both boardgames and role-playing games.

48. How often would you like to see the RP Gamer section (which would include role-playing adventures and supplementary materials) appear in the magazine? 0 = Not at all; 1 = Once per year; 2 = Two or three times per year; 3 = Four of five times per year; 4 = Six times per year (once in every issue); 5 = Eight times per year (once in every game issue plus two adventures or supplements in the non-game issues).

Questions 49 through 59 ask you to rate your interest in seeing the magazine columns continue. Please rate each on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 indicating very little desire in seeing the column continue and 5 indicating a strong preference for the column.

49. Universe CommLink
50. Questing
51. Science for Science Fiction
52. Facts for Fantasy
53. Media
54. Games
55. Software
56. RP Gaming
57. Books
58. Film & Television
59. Muse

Please rate the following games on a scale of 1 to 5 with a 1 indicating a particularly strong dislike for the game and 5 indicating an especially favorable response. **Please rate only those games which you have played (against an opponent or solitaire) in the last year. If you have not played the game, do not rate it (respond "0" in the space).** ***Games by other publishers are indicated by initials or names in parentheses.***

60. STAR TRADER™ game
61. ALBION: LAND OF FAERIE™ game
62. DRAGONSLAYER™ game
63. STAR FRONTIERS™ game
64. REVOLT ON ANTARES™ game
65. SAGA™ game
66. VAMPYRE™ game
67. ATTACK FORCE™ game
68. VIKING GODS™ game
69. Titan™ game (AH)
70. Fifth Frontier War™ game (GDW)
71. Invasion: Earth™ game (GDW)
72. The Air Eaters Strike Back™ game (MGC)
73. Survival/The Barbarian™ game (MGC)
74. Ultra-Warrior™ game (MGC)
75. Helltank™ game (MGC)
76. Heroes of Olympus™ game (TFG)
77. The Arduin Adventure™ game (Grimoire)
78. Champions™ game (Hero)
79. Barbarian Prince™ game (Dwarfstar)
80. Star Viking™ game (Dwarfstar)

Rate the following game proposals on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating very little interest in seeing such a game and 5 indicating a strong desire in seeing such a game.

81. Adventures in the Witch World. Based on Andre Norton's popular Witch World series, this adventure game would simulate the events of the entire Kolder war. Including events which transpired prior to Simon Tregarth's arrival in Witch World and including such events as the closing of the Gate and the birth of the Three, the game would use a variant of the *Albion: Land of Faerie* game system for army and character interaction. The system would be altered slightly to simulate the distinct way in which the magic of the witches functions, and a more detailed character-to-character combat system would also be included. The adventures of Simon, Lady Jaelith, Koris, Kyllan, Kemoc, and Kathea would all be recreated, allowing the lives of the characters to be relived by the players in a role-playing fashion, while providing the overview of a conflict simulation. Also included would be a section giving the *DragonQuest*™ game characteristic information for the inhabitants of Witch World and instructions for a full blown role-playing campaign in that world. Subject to approval by the author, this game would consist of a 22"x34" map, 200 counters, and a 16-page rules booklet with character portraits. To sell for $15.

82. Valley of the Pharoahs. Among the mysterious lost cities, buried tombs, and forgotten temples of the world, seekers for the secrets of the ancient world vie among themselves for the glory of discovery and for the hoards of wealth. *Valley of the Pharoahs* would combine elements of role-playing with a chit generation system (similar to the *Citadel of Blood*™ game). Players may become archeologists, grave robbers, or agents of world governments — all battling to find the entrances to the strange tombs and temples, which would be explored using the chit generation system. Set in the time frame of the first half of this century, the game would include vengeful natives, golden idols, inexplicable events, cursed tombs, and perhaps the Pharoah himself risen to exterminate the violators of his resting place. Scenarios would cover the search for treasure from the Congo to the South Pacific, from the Amazon jungles to the Himalayas. It would include 400 counters of various shapes and sizes, an adventure map, and 16 pages of rules. To sell for $18.

83. Tarzan of the Apes. Recreating the Africa of Edgar Rice Burroughs' immortal series, *Tarzan of the Apes* would be a character-adventure game in which the life,

loves, and adventures of the great Ape Man would be detailed. Numerous scenarios would capture the flavor and excitement of Burroughs' novels — Tarzan saving Jane from the clutches of the evil Count Rakoff; leading expeditions to the fabled land of Opar, Pelucidar, and Nimmr; and preventing the Germans from overrunning his home lands in World Wars One and Two. Each major character would have a card or tile with individual characteristics, and the other playing pieces would represent animals — friend or foe of Tarzan — tribes, expedition members, and soldiers. The 22"x34" map would recreate the Africa of Burroughs, and would include a tactical combat display where Tarzan confronts his enemies. *Tarzan of the Apes* would come with rules offering several levels of play. Availability due to agreement with the author's estate. To sell for $18.

84. Gil (ARM) Hamilton. Gil Hamilton of the United Nations Police Force, an ARM, is not your normal police detective. Gifted with excellent intelligence and a psychic third arm, he confronts strange crimes — crimes that employ the furthest limits of known science for nefarious means, which he must first understand and then use to track down the criminal. *Gil (ARM) Hamilton* would be a solitaire game of criminal investigation, adapting the story-paragraph system of the *Return of the Stainless Steel Rat*™ game. The plot of the story would revolve around a short story by Larry Niven, and the game system would include rules for tracking down clues, grilling suspects, and physically apprehending the perpetrator. The game would include many role-playing features for possible multi-player games. It would include a 22"x34" map, 200 counters, and 16 pages of rules. A possible game for *Ares* Magazine, to sell separately for $15. Availability subject to agreement with Mr. Niven.

85. The Weapon Shops of Isher. For thousands of years, the weapon shops have prospered, despite their official ban by the empire. Now, in the reign of the young Princess Innelda, war is being waged on these bastions of justice. Based on the science fiction classic by A. E. van Vogt, *The Weapon Shops of Isher* would be a two-player game of military, political and scientific intrigue in the far future. The Isher player must neutralize the weapon shop network while coping with entangled and corrupt bureaucracy surrounding the empire. The Weapon Shop player must spread the moral and civil rights expressed by the shops while attempting to overcome the continued assaults of imperial military and scientific might. All the individuals important to the struggle would be represented, including Cayle Clark, Robert Hendrock, Chris McAllister, and the Empress herself. Special rules would cover the weapon shop information center, the houses of illusion, officer commissions, the time-energy machines, and other plot elements. The game will include a 22"x34" map, 200 counters, and 16 pages of rules. A possible game to appear in *Ares* Magazine, to be accompanied by a story by Mr. van Vogt. Availability subject to agreement with the author. To sell for $15 separately.

86. Lord Valentine's Castle. On the multi-racial world of Majipoor, a great betrayal has taken place. Valentine, rightful Coronal of Majipoor, has had his memory erased and been outcast to the farthest reaches; now an imposter sits on the throne and Valentine must wind his way back to Castle Mount, assembling followers who will help him regain his title. Based on the epic work by Robert Silverberg, *Lord Valentine's Castle* would be a solitaire game of mystery and adventure. Valentine must regain his memory as he wanders across Majipoor, combat the dreadful sendings from the King of Dreams, and eventually march to regain his throne, all the time attempting to unravel the mystery of who replaced him. All major characters from the novel will be incorporated as will the strange races that inhabit the planet. The game will include a 22"x34" map of the planet, plus combat displays; 200 playing pieces; and rules that combine random encounters with story-paragraphs. A possible game for *Ares* Magazine, to be accompanied by a story by Mr. Silverberg. Availability subject to agreement with the author. To sell separately for $15.

87. The High Crusade. Little did the Wesgorix explorers know, as they studied earth for possible conquest, that they would meet an enemy who would overwhelm them — medieval knights in shiny armor which deflected their laser beams. In a trice, the exploratory ship had been captured and Baron Roger de Tourneville and his entourage set out to spread the Word across the galaxy. *The High Crusade*, based on the novel by Poul Anderson, recreates the initial events of the book and extends the human crusade through space. Half the 22"x34" mapsheet would show on a strategic level the growth of the crusader's empire; the other half would be tactical displays for resolving combats between armies and spaceships. Game rules would cover proselytizing, setting up and developing colonies, improving technology, and potential treachery within human and alien ranks. A possible game for *Ares* Magazine, to be accompanied by a story by Mr. Anderson. Availability subject to agreement with the author. To sell separately for $15.

88. The Forever War. Based on the novel by Joe Haldeman, *The Forever War* would recreate the 1143-year-long war between the humans and their first alien contact, the Taurans. In the tactical game, a player would create a character — human or Tauran — to take part in the ferocious battles on distant bases; dressed in fighting suits, the soldiers are self-contained armories able to withstand laser and grenade blasts. In the strategic game, players guide the military strategy of each side, sending attack forces to important enemy bases while still maintaining enough protective forces to withstand an unexpected sortie. Rules would cover the effects of relativistic interstellar travel, instantaneous travel between collapsars, rising in rank, improvements in weapons technology, and futuristic combat tactics. The game would include a 22"x34" sheet — half a strategic display and the rest divided into various terrain types for operational combat. The 200 counters would include individual soldiers, drones, interstellar ships, and markers to keep track of military levels among the various colonies and stargates. A possible game for *Ares* Magazine, to be accompanied by a story by Mr. Haldeman. Availability subject to agreement with author. To sell for $15.

89. The Chameleon Corps. Threats to the life of the President of the planet Cranada were nothing new, but three separate assassination attempts in one day were. Called out of semi-retirement by the Political Espionage Office, Chameleon Corps officer Ben Jolson is assigned the task of tracking down the would-be assassins. As a shape-changer — able to transform himself into a perfect facsimile of the President, any suspect, or even a wooden door — Jolson thinks his job simple, until he realizes that limited shape-changing is a natural talent of the Cranadians. It becomes a question of his talents and intelligence against the assassins'. *The Chameleon Corps*, based on the series by Ron Goulart, would be a solitaire adventure of criminal detection and political machinations. Adapting the *Return of the Stainless Steel Rat* game system, *Chameleon Corps* would follow Jolson's investigations through the halls of the Cranadian capital. The game would include a 22"x34" map of the city and special structures, an equivalent of 200 single and double-sized counters, and an extended story-paragraph system. A possible game for *Ares* Magazine, to be accompanied by a story by Mr. Goulart. Availability subject to agreement with the author. To sell separately for $15.

90. Riverworld. Based on the series by Philip Jose Farmer, *Riverworld* would recreate the search by a resurrected human race for the secret of their rebirth. Players assume the roles of the major characters in the series —Richard Burton, Samuel Clemens, Cyrano de Bergerac, and King John — and attempt to build some sort of transport — steamship, dirigible, airplane — to move up the river to its secret source. Each player would keep track of his position along the river by placing chits; as they travel, they may meet allies or rivals, grail slavers or believers in the Second Coming, the mysterious controlling aliens or unknown races. Special rules would cover resurrection of a dead character at another location along the river, stealing transportation, bartering for or stealing of resources, and finally discovering the possible secrets of Riverworld and its mysterious creators. The game would contain 400 chits and would use a variation of the *Citadel of Blood* game system. A possible game for *Ares* Magazine, to be accompanied by a story by Mr. Farmer. Availability subject to agreement with the author. To sell separately for $15.

91. Iowa 5. A *Universe*™ game adventure guide presenting in glorious detail the populated lawless planet of Iowa 5 in the Tau Ceti star system. This guide would provide the Gamesmaster with dozens of adventure ideas through the maps of the major cities and sites on the planet, with all locations completely described. The planet would be populated with countless sponsors and non-player characters waiting to plunge the characters into all manner of employment and adventure. The book would also include schematic and organizational breakdowns of New Flynn, Iowa 5's corruption-ridden spaceport, plus the major surface shuttle terminals and security forces. The possible directions of all adventures in which the characters might be involved will be explained to conclusion. *Iowa 5* would consist of a 64-page book. To sell for $10.

92. The Moons of Vega 6. A grand role-playing adventure for the *Universe* game which may be played by 1 to 5 players without a GM, the supplement would use a story-paragraph system plus several random encounter matrices. Five interweaving stories will be included. In the star system of Vega, several economic, political and scientific elements struggle for power. Vega 3 is fast becoming a major state within the Federation, with political and economic factions secretly working towards becoming a seat of independent empire. Vega 6 is a Federation-controlled colony with unique geological features and two interesting moons: one produces plants from which powerful psionic and medical drugs can be manufactured, and the other possesses ruins of a colony of an ancient star-faring race from which researchers hope to piece together early galactic history and keys to new technology. The nationalistic interests on Vega 3 wish to control the treasures of Vega 6 and its moons for themselves, and from this mix comes intrigue and conflict. The plotlines, each with variable endings and each capable of some interaction with the others, deal with smuggling, political and scientific intrigue, exploration and espionage in which a character can work for Vega 3 or for the Federation. A 64-page book to sell for $10.

93. The Book of Days. A *DragonQuest* game supplementary calendar, keyed to no particular year (i.e., it would be arranged to function no matter the year in which a campaign takes place), it would detail the various high holidays and festivals during a typical year. All magic Colleges and the powers of Light and Darkness would have special days, as well as holidays celebrated by everyone. Keyed to the *Frontiers of Alusia* map, it would also discuss the festivals of local areas. A 48-page booklet to sell for $8.

94. The Talisman of Jupiter. A *DragonQuest* game supplement expanding the Aspect system within the game rules, giving each created character a very distinct horoscope and including a set of rules for using the information. Also, an expansion and refinement of the character generation system would be introduced. The Astrologer skill would be expanded to taken into account the changes of the Aspects, and using Astrology to a greater degree in any campaign would be discussed. A 40-page booklet. To sell for $8.

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TEAM COUNTERS

McDowell Ast	Payne Ast	Lopata Ast	Ruiz Ast	Team
Townsend Phy	Rakowski Eng	Heller Sm	Baxter Bio	Schuyler Am

EQUIPMENT COUNTERS

Vision Mech	Tools Mech	Infra Elec	Geiger Elec	Rcord Elec
Discovery	Magn Elec	Ohm Elec	Pyrom Elec	Radio Elec

Damocles Mission™ Game Counter Section Nr. 2 (140 pieces): Front

Quantity of Sections of this identical type: 1. Total quantity of Sections (of all types) in game: 2.

2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	B

EQUIP ID #

1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

B	B	B	B	B	B	Actv	Actv	Actv	Actv
B	B	B	B	B	B	Actv	Actv	Actv	Actv

STATUS MARKERS

ACCESSWAYS

◄ 51 ►	◄ 52 ►	◄ 53 ►	◄ 54 ►	◄ 55 ►
◄ 56 ►	◄ 61 ►	◄ 62 ►	◄ 63 ►	◄ 64 ►
◄ 65 ►	◄ 64 ►	◄ 63 ►	◄ 62 ►	◄ 61 ►
◄ 56 ►	◄ 55 ►	◄ 54 ►	◄ 53 ►	◄ 52 ►

◄ 51 ►	◄ 52 ►	◄ 53 ►	◄ 54 ►	◄ 55 ►
◄ 56 ►	◄ 61 ►	◄ 62 ►	◄ 63 ►	◄ 64 ►
◄ 65 ►	◄ 64 ►	◄ 63 ►	◄ 62 ►	◄ 61 ►
◄ 56 ►	◄ 55 ►	◄ 54 ►	◄ 53 ►	◄ 52 ►

ACCESSWAYS

Impassable	Impassable	Impassable	Impassable	Impassable
Impassable	Impassable	Impassable	Impassable	Impassable

IMPASSABLE/OFF MARKERS

◄ 51 ►	◄ 52 ►	◄ 53 ►	◄ 54 ►	◄ 55 ►
◄ 56 ►	◄ 61 ►	◄ 62 ►	◄ 63 ►	◄ 64 ►

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Permanent Off	Permanent Off	Permanent Off	Permanent Off	Permanent Off
Permanent Off	Permanent Off	Permanent Off	Permanent Off	Permanent Off

1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

B	B	B	B	B	B
B	B	B	B	B	B

DANGER	DANGER	DANGER	DANGER
DANGER	DANGER	DANGER	DANGER

3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	B
2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3

Townsend INCAP Phys	Rakowski INCAP Engnr	Heller INCAP Semnt	Baxter INCAP Biolog	Schuyler INCAP Astmr
McDowell INCAP Astrnt	Payne INCAP Astrnt	Lopata INCAP Astrnt	Ruiz INCAP Astrnt	

	Magn Dmg	Ohm Dmg	Pyrom Dmg	Radio Dmg
Vision Dmg	Tools Dmg	Infra Dmg	Geiger Dmg	Rcord Dmg

Damocles Mission™ Game Counter Section Nr. 2 (140 pieces): Back

54 Vision 32 Radio 24 Tools	55 Vision 41 Ohmmeter 41 Magnetometer	56 Vision 33 Magnetometer 13 Geiger	61 Vision 33 Radio 23 Infrared	52 Vision 25 Infrared 41 Magnetometer
61 Vision 21 Pyrometer 36 Ohmmeter	54 Vision 16 Pyrometer 26 Tools	54 Vision 15 Pyrometer 22 Infrared	64 Vision 26 Tools 23 Pyrometer	65 Vision 42 Ohmmeter 35 Radio
56 Vision 32 Radio 16 Geiger	62 Vision 16 Geiger 24 Ohmmeter	56 Vision 33 Ohmmeter 31 Tools	56 Vision 16 Pyrometer 23 Infrared	46 Vision 13 Pyrometer 23 Tools
36 Vision 16 Geiger 26 Ohmmeter	61 Vision 42 Magnetometer 24 Infrared	62 Vision 24 Infrared 21 Pyrometer	53 Vision 33 Radio 16 Geiger	51 Vision 22 Geiger 32 Tools
53 Vision 42 Magnetometer 33 Tools	56 Vision 23 Geiger 36 Ohmmeter	61 Vision 34 Radio 21 Geiger	63 Vision 36 Magnetometer 36 Ohmmeter	66 Vision 16 Infrared 26 Radio

32 Vision 34 Infrared 35 Radio	51 Vision 36 Tools 34 Radio	43 Vision 36 Infrared 23 Radio	56 Vision 24 Infrared 23 Magnetometer	32 Vision 24 Pyrometer 34 Tools
61 Vision 31 Ohmmeter 32 Infrared	66 Vision 42 Ohmmeter 42 Magnetometer	54 Vision 32 Ohmeter 24 Radio	61 Vision 35 Tools 24 Pyrometer	36 Vision 16 Infrared 26 Radio
54 Vision 42 Magnetometer 31 Tools	63 Vision 35 Magnetometer 35 Ohmmeter	66 Vision 26 Ohmmeter 36 Tools	56 Vision 22 Infrared 41 Magnetometer	54 Vision 21 Geiger 16 Pyrometer
55 Vision 36 Magnetometer 23 Pyrometer	52 Vision 32 Radio 15 Geiger	46 Vision 26 Infrared 24 Pyrometer	65 Vision 26 Geiger 26 Tools	65 Vision 23 Radio 46 Magnetometer
54 Vision 36 Infrared 23 Radio	63 Vision 32 Ohmmeter 26 Geiger	64 Vision 35 Tools 15 Geiger	45 Vision 13 Infrared 43 Radio	46 Vision 22 Geiger 26 Pyrometer

111

Activate	14...22	•	
1 Vision	23...54	►	207
2 Infra	15...36	►	148
3 Radio	14...23	►	208
Backfire	•		210

112

Activate	13...15	•	
1 Vision	13...55	►	156
2 Magn	22...36	►	186
3 Pyrom	13...23	►	200
Backfire	•		2

114

1 Vision	32...54	►	146
2 Magn	13...42	►	188
3 Tools	13...31	►	155
Backfire	•		41

115

1 Vision	32...61	►	110
2 Ohm	12...31	►	117
3 Infra	14...32	►	133
Backfire	•		171

117

1 Vision	14...32	►	169
2 Infra	12...34	►	37
3 Radio	16...35	►	31
Backfire	•		104

118

1 Vision	32...63	►	166
2 Ohm	16...32	►	173
3 Geiger	12...26	►	4
Backfire	•		15

121

Activate	15...25	•	
1 Vision	13...52	►	199
2 Radio	14...32	►	164
3 Geiger	13...15	►	161
Backfire	•		54

124

1 Vision	52...63	►	99
2 Magn	16...35	►	157
3 Ohm	26...35	►	190
Backfire	•		192

127

1 Vision	22...66	►	79
2 Ohm	22...42	►	147
3 Magn	22...42	►	172
Backfire	•		159

128

1 Vision	32...51	►	196
2 Tools	22...36	►	92
3 Radio	15...34	►	49
Backfire	•		7

129

1 Vision	15...64	►	198
2 Tools	14...35	►	154
3 Geiger	12...15	►	55
Backfire	•		170

131

Activate	16...31	•	
1 Vision	22...46	►	80
2 Infra	13...26	►	197
3 Pyrom	16...24	►	76
Backfire	•		52

132

Activate	15...26	•	
1 Vision	32...66	►	130
2 Ohm	21...26	►	184
3 Tools	22...36	►	116
Backfire	•		62

216

1 Vision	32...54	►	30
2 Ohm	22...32	►	185
3 Radio	23...24	►	61
Backfire	•		129

217

1 Vision	13...43	►	206
2 Infra	32...36	►	209
3 Radio	16...23	►	220
Backfire	•		211

138

1 Vision	22...45	►	181
2 Infra	11...13	►	118
3 Radio	21...43	►	43
Backfire	•		94

139

1 Vision	31...65	►	195
2 Geiger	13...26	►	106
3 Tools	21...26	►	111
Backfire	•		125

211

Activate	14...26	•	
1 Vision	32...56	►	57
2 Infra	12...22	►	179
3 Magn	12...41	►	108
Backfire	•		59

214

1 Vision	14...61	►	40
2 Tools	22...35	►	182
3 Pyrom	12...24	►	66
Backfire	•		112

215

1 Vision	22...56	►	33
2 Infra	14...24	►	158
3 Magn	12...23	►	183
Backfire	•		144

134

1 Vision	32...46	►	194
2 Geiger	11...22	►	143
3 Pyrom	14...26	►	150
Backfire	•		72

137

1 Vision	13...65	►	178
2 Radio	15...23	►	74
3 Magn	21...46	►	152
Backfire	•		167

218

1 Vision	14...54	►	28
2 Geiger	13...21	►	100
3 Pyrom	11...16	►	187
Backfire	•		124

221

Activate	12...35	•	
1 Vision	13...36	►	75
2 Infra	12...16	►	174
3 Radio	14...26	►	168
Backfire	•		107

222

Activate	13...16	•	
1 Vision	22...32	►	77
2 Pyrom	12...24	►	163
3 Tools	31...34	►	114
Backfire	•		132

Damocles Mission™ Game Counter Section Nr. 1 (50 pieces): Tiles

Quantity of Sections of this identical type: 1. Total quantity of Sections (of all types) in game: 2.

224

1 Vision	22...53	►	71
2 Magn	22...42	►	176
3 Tools	22...33	►	102
Backfire	•		121

225

1 Vision	22...36	►	73
2 Geiger	11...16	►	175
3 Ohm	11...26	►	105
Backfire	•		149

227

1 Vision	23...56	►	64
2 Radio	22...32	►	68
3 Geiger	12...16	►	177
Backfire	•		103

228

1 Vision	32...61	►	38
2 Pyrom	12...21	►	115
3 Ohm	22...36	►	180
Backfire	•		142

231

Activate	13...16	•	
1 Vision	22...54	►	56
2 Radio	14...32	►	165
3 Tools	16...24	►	189
Backfire	•		97

234

1 Vision	22...56	►	32
2 Geiger	12...23	►	122
3 Ohm	22...36	►	191
Backfire	•		24

235

1 Vision	22...61	►	29
2 Magn	22...42	►	36
3 Infra	14...24	►	63
Backfire	•		193

236

1 Vision	22...62	►	60
2 Geiger	12...16	►	135
3 Ohm	15...24	►	34
Backfire	•		17

237

1 Vision	22...54	►	67
2 Pyrom	12...16	►	35
3 Tools	22...26	►	21
Backfire	•		69

311

Activate	14...26	•	
1 Vision	22...55	►	87
2 Ohm	21...41	►	20
3 Magn	21...41	►	90
Backfire	•		134

312

Activate	15...21	•	
1 Vision	22...61	►	91
2 Radio	14...34	►	58
3 Geiger	12...21	►	140
Backfire	•		22

314

1 Vision	32...62	►	19
2 Infra	13...24	►	26
3 Pyrom	13...21	►	65
Backfire	•		70

315

1 Vision	22...56	►	16
2 Ohm	16...33	►	82
3 Tools	15...31	►	6
Backfire	•		85

317

1 Vision	32...54	►	39
2 Pyrom	13...15	►	126
3 Infra	13...22	►	101
Backfire	•		8

318

1 Vision	32...56	►	18
2 Magn	21...33	►	27
3 Geiger	12...13	►	120
Backfire	•		3

321

Activate	16...26	•	
1 Vision	25...63	►	11
2 Magn	21...36	►	88
3 Ohm	22...36	►	139
Backfire	•		219

322

Activate	15...24	•	
1 Vision	23...53	►	25
2 Radio	13...33	►	95
3 Geiger	12...16	►	138
Backfire	•		48

324

1 Vision	32...56	►	51
2 Pyrom	13...16	►	45
3 Infra	13...23	►	109
Backfire	•		1

325

1 Vision	23...64	►	13
2 Tools	23...26	►	10
3 Pyrom	12...23	►	86
Backfire	•		113

327

1 Vision	22...61	►	46
2 Radio	13...33	►	78
3 Infra	13...23	►	9
Backfire	•		93

331

Activate	13...16	•	
1 Vision	32...66	►	14
2 Infra	13...16	►	81
3 Radio	16...26	►	128
Backfire	•		23

332

Activate	13...24	•	
1 Vision	16...51	►	89
2 Geiger	13...22	►	98
3 Tools	14...32	►	42
Backfire	•		123

334

1 Vision	34...46	►	47
2 Pyrom	12...13	►	84
3 Tools	14...23	►	127
Backfire	•		5

335

1 Vision	21...65	►	96
2 Ohm	21...42	►	12
3 Radio	13...35	►	136
Backfire	•		44

337

1 Vision	22...52	►	53
2 Infra	14...25	►	50
3 Magn	15...41	►	83
Backfire	•		131

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