

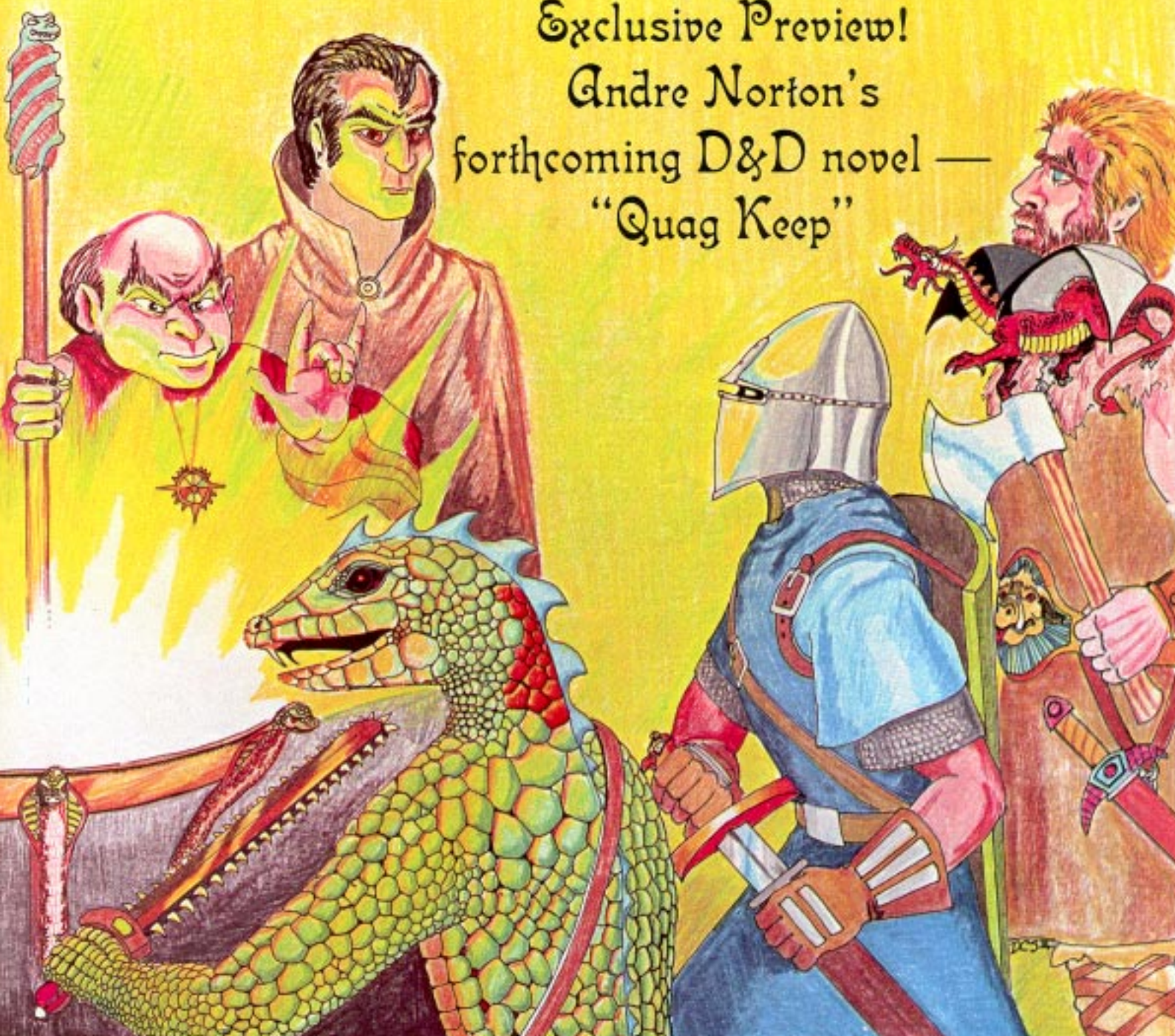
The Dragon

#12

Vol. II No. 6
\$1.50
February, 1978

The magazine of Fantasy, Swords & Sorcery
and Science Fiction Gaming

Exclusive Preview!
Andre Norton's
forthcoming D&D novel —
"Quag Keep"



Design Forum

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE SPEED OF A LIGHTNING BOLT

by James Ward

For a very long time now many judges and players alike have maintained the idea that, all things being equal when a wizard and a fighter round the same corner in a dungeon pity the poor wizard because he will never get his spell off in time! Since I usually always play magic users in any given game this concept naturally had me worried. Then, (and may they keep on sending out these great ideas) *Eldritch Wizardry* came out and the magic users life was given another chance.

Within those pages is a short section on the melee round, and "never has so few pages done so much for so many magic users." I myself upon first and second reading, just passed this section off as more stuff to slow down a game, and went on to those magic items, (that are truly deadly). After using the melee round chart in my game, I realized that they have great potential for all the downtrodden and unarmored arcane masters.

Take any given fighter with a dexterity of 15 and any given magic user (able to cast lightning bolts and taking one) with a dexterity of 15 and make them round corners at the same time with 40 feet of space between, now use the chart. Adjusting for dexterity gives us a zero. The magic user does not have his spell ready and it is a third level spell, so the chart says he has a minus two in getting it off and he was not surprised so he falls under the minus 5/minus 1 section and gets the bolt off in the fourth phase of the round, (and may the fighter not make his magic saving throw)! The strong (and most likely vicious) fighter is wearing plate mail, giving him a minus 6, and is using a large shield, (because his type usually does) and gets a minus 3 for that. He was carrying a torch so his weapon was not at hand or ready, but the chart does not provide for penalties for drawing his weapon (which is not fair, but that's life) and he was not surprised either, so has a minus 9 which puts his turn in the fifth movement phase. Notice, that I am not even counting the section on movement and its effect on turn segments, because it is only a matter of a fraction of a phase and not worth bothering with.

After taking all things into consideration, that magic user is going to blast the fighter to smithereens! Even if the fighter is not dead, let us say that he is at least wounded 50%. The fighter gets his turn and usually hits any given magic user. The next melee turn the magic user does nothing but run (if he lives and is not wounded that 50%), and his new dexterity score is in the 0/ plus four column. The fighter on the other hand still has the minus 9, gets a plus 2 for his weapon in hand, and now has that minus four because he is wounded. His new dexterity rating is minus 11 which puts him on another scale and he strikes in the sixth phase while our good friend the magic user is running like the wind in the third phase!

Then we come up against those Conan types! The mighty fighter that wears little or no armor, preferring speed and quickness in battle, to the security of a metal "tin can". It is possible to still come out on top if the magic user is smart. We give the Conan in our example a dexterity of 18, leather armor, and that large shield, (he likes to carry this around because he doesn't feel the weight). The magic user in this case will also have a dexterity of 18, but all other things will be the same. The mighty fighter now has a minus two for the leather, a minus three for the shield, was holding that torch so has a zero for his weapon, and is not surprised. Now he is moving in that fourth movement phase and ready for an easy kill! The magic user, having fought Conan types before, knows he has big troubles and cannot afford to let the fighter get

simultaneous chops, switches his tactics and uses a first level spell. This gives him no minus's of any type and he moves in the third movement phase. The choice of spells is a tough one, because he can use the charm person or the magic missile. The charm person is great, if it works, and that is a big if! The magic missile spell is good, because the arrows have a good chance of hitting the lightly armored fighter and if they wound him past the 50% or 75% mark, that's a plus for the magic user the next round. Thought must be given to the number of arrows sent out. The wizard type that sends more of those magic missiles should choose it over the charm spell, but the little magic user should possibly favor the charm spell.

In the second example, the magic user was a 13th level wizard and he pitched the arrows with all of them hitting. The fighter didn't seem too bothered by them and slashed and hit the magic user. The next round naturally the magic user ran for his life, but at least he made the fighter bleed a little bit.

SHIP'S CARGO

by James Endersby and John Carroll

Variety in the types and amounts of treasure can often enhance the enjoyment of Dungeons and Dragons. On the high seas, an encounter with an alien merchant ship leads to a brisk battle, after which the victorious party examines the cargo hold to determine their booty. This captured treasure can turn out to be either highly valuable or next to worthless. The following outline was developed for a voyage to Japan which was never completed (although the characters involved passed off Nubian slaves as captured Japanese peasants).

Cargo can only be determined *after* grappling and surrender or annihilation of enemy forces. Small merchant ships can hold up to twelve units of cargo, while large merchant ships can hold up to thirty units. Roll a six-sided die for each kind of treasure possible; each roll of a one means that there are from one to six units of that particular type of cargo on board. If the total number of units of cargo is greater than the capacity of the ship, neglect the least valuable cargo.

Cargo	Value per Unit Gold pieces	Comments
Spice		
Silk	1000	
Precious Stones	1000	Amber, flint, jade, marble, emeralds, etc.
Ivory		
Precious Wood	300	Only 1-4 units; ebony, teak, balsa, etc.
Tea	350	
Cotton	250	
Jewelry	1000	This is primitive and low-grade stuff, not the jewelry used in normal D&D campaigns.
Cloth	250	
Livestock (exotic)	250	Camels, falcons, peacocks, monkeys, ocelots, Arabian horses, etc.
Fruits and vegetables	100	Spoilage may occur, especially over long voyages.
Foreign slaves	—	20-60 people.

Also, roll for treasure — type A.

There is also a 15% chance that a few passengers are aboard ship. These passengers can be merchants, adventurers, or noblemen.



Lyle's Hobby & Craft Center

Large Selection of Wargames

852-8085

38 North Cass Ave.
Westmont, Ill. 60559

FLORIDA'S LARGEST

Fantasy and military wargame shop. Airfix • Archive • A-H • Battline • C in C • Garrison • GDW • GHQ • Genadier • Heritage • McEwan • Metagaming • Minifig Ral Partha • SPI • Superior • TSR • WRG • and others. **Quantity discounts.** Catalog 50¢-refundable first order.

MODELERS MART — Dept D

760 N. Indian Rocks Road

Belleair Bluffs, Fl 33540 (St. Petersburg Area)