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AUGUST 1981
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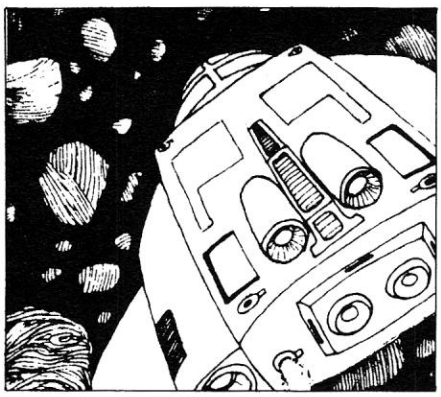

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ISSUE 13
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Features

4 **THE LAND OF FAERIE**
By Scott R. Turner
An informative overview of the land of Sprites, Gnomes, Demons, and other Fairies.

10 **THE TRAVELLERS' AID SOCIETY**
By Iain Delaney
Is Your *Traveller* character in need of assistance when exploring the Unknown? Now he can join the Travellers' Aid Society.

12 **ROLE-PLAYING IN THE LAND OF XANTH**
By Leonard H. Kanterman M.D.
Take Your character to Piers Anthonys' *Land of Xanth.* This article will help get you there.

14 **THE CULT OF ERLIN THE HARPER**
By Jane Woodward
At last, a bard's cult. Includes lifestyle and philosophy descriptions, musical skills, instrument descriptions, examples and exotic magic.

24 **SAMURAI SWORDS**
By Steven R. Marsh
Ever wonder what Japanese swords could do? Find out.

Columns

3 **EDITORIAL/SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION**
30 **METAL MARVELS** *By John T. Sapienza Jr.*
Samurai figures by *Archive, Stan Johansen,* and *Ral Partha.*
36 **REVIEWS** This issue contains reviews of *Land of the Rising Sun* and the *Arduin Adventure.*
40 **GAME CONS** Make plans now!
42 **THE SWORD OF HOLLYWOOD** *By Larry DiTillio*
Hot rumours and innuendos.
44 **QUICK PLUGS** Short descriptions of new fantasy products.
46 **A LETTER FROM GIGI** *By Gigi D'Arn.*
Why Is Chaosium going to Seattle?
48 **RECRUITING BOARD**

Artists

FRONT COVER: Roland Brown.
INTERIORS: Bob Barger, Rick Becker, Tom Clark, David Dudley, Paul Jaquays, Steve Oliff, Valerie Olson, Reed Stover, Mike Troller, Robin Wood, Jane Woodward.

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BACK ISSUES

Nr. 1 **Sold Out**

Nr. 2 **Apr/May 1979**
Beginner's Brew; Review of *Legacy*; Specialty Mages Part 2; Character Name Tables; My Life & Role-Playing Continued!; *Starships & Spacemen* Expansion Kit; Arduin, Bloody Arduin; The Cacodemon Cult; Dramatic Structure of RPGs; A Letter from Gigi.

Nr. 3 **Jun/Jul 1979**
Review of *Bushido*; My Life & Role-Playing 3; Research and Rules; Specialty Mages Part 3; Role-Playing: How to Do It; Druid's Valley; The Three Feathered Rivals Cult; New Clerical Cure System; A Letter from Gigi.

Nr.4 **Aug/Sep 1979**
Games to Gold; Beginner's Brew; Kirk on Karit 2; Enchanted Weapons Table; A perspective on Role-Playing; Waha's Quest; Letter from Gigi.

Nr.5 **Oct/Nov 1979**
Arduin for the masses; Games to Gold Update; Developing a Character's Appearance; Some Greek Gods; The Cult of Apollo; My life and Role-Playing Cont.; Encounter Systems; To Be or Not to Be a Pure Strain Human That is the Question!; Clippings; A letter from Gigi.

Nr. 6 **Dec/Jan 1980**
Gangster: An overview; Super Rules for *Superhero: 2044*; Finding Level in *RuneQuest*; How to Make Monsters Interesting; Vardy Combat System Part 1; The World of *Crane*; Insanity Table; The Cult of Gestetner; A Letter from Gigi.

Nr. 7 **Apr/May 1980**
Ten Days in the Arena of Khazan; *Cults of Prax* Review; Gloranthan Birthday Tables; Vardy Combat System Part 2; Foundchild Cult; *In the Labyrinth* Review; Power Groups and Player Characters in RPGs; Metal Marvels; System Snobbery; Oriental Weapons for *RQ*; A Letter from Gigi.

Nr. 8 **Jun/Jul 1980**
Teaching Role-Playing; Sleep vs. Mixed Parties; *Alien* and *Starships & Spacemen* Review; Talent Tables; Bearhug Game Accessories Review; GM Styles; Composite Bows; *The Keep in the Borderlands* Review; Cult of Zelan the Beast; *Tradition of Victory* Review; How I Designed *Land of the Rising Sun*; Alignment on Trial; Metal Marvels; *Advanced Melee & Wizard* Review; A Letter from Gigi.

Editorial

LEARNING

Role-playing is a learning experience for most of us. For most of us "real" role-players the fun is in watching the interplay of different morals, philosophies, cultures, and ways of life of the characters. It really helps in understanding people, by analysing their motivations, why are they the way they are, why did they do that?

With the availability of *Bushido* and *Land of the Rising Sun*, and the popularity of the *Shogun* TV show, many are now learning some things about the Japanese. Playing these games is great fun but to try to understand the Japanese is very difficult. To quote Will Durant:

"We should remember that it may be hard to understand a people five thousand miles distant, and differing from us in color and language, government and religion, manners and morals, characters and ideals, literature and art. Lafcaino Hearn was more intimate with Japan than any other Western writer of his time, and yet he spoke of 'the immense difficulty of perceiving and comprehending what underlies the surface of Japanese life'.'Your information about us,' a genial Japanese essayist reminds the Occidental, 'is based on the meagre translations of our immense literature, if not on the unreliable anecdotes of passing travellers . . . We Asiatics are often appalled by the curious web of facts and fancies which has been woven concerning us. We are pictured as living on the perfume of the Lotus, if not on mice and cockroaches.' What follows, therefore [Durant's section of the Japanese in his *The Story of Civilization*], is a tentative approach – based upon the briefest direct acquaintance – to Japanese civilization and character, each student must correct it by long and personal experience. The first lesson of philosophy is that we may all be mistaken."

Enjoy the games and the articles.

Happy gaming,

Tadashi Ehara

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BACK ISSUES

Nr. 9 **Aug/Sept 1980**
Flippancy in FRP; Boardgames to RPGs; *Zargonian Figures* Review; The Imperium; *Verbosh* Review; ORIGINS Pictorial; Variable Alignment System; Cult of the Tiger; Metal Marvels; Place for Adventure; *Gateway Bestiary* Review; A Letter from Gigi.

Nr. 10 **Oct/Nov 1980**
You Gotta Be Fiendish; *Traveller* Mutations; An Adventure for Novices; Fantasy Gaming and Scale; The Usefullness of FRP Games; Another Look at *RQ* Movement; Gem Types & Values; Aspects of Adventure Gaming; Review of *Temple to Athena*; A Letter from Gigi.

Nr.11 **Feb/Mar 1981**
Running Low Level Dungeons; Better Role-Playing: A Change of Hobbit; Games and Gaming; Part 2 - Gems and Magic; A New Computer System for *Traveller*; The Fourfold Way of FRP; Books and Gaming; Scorpio Rising; *RQ*/Gateway Cult: Cult of Kali; Personalities of Role-Playing Gamers; Eleven Different Reviews; Sword of Hollywood; A letter from Gigi.

Nr. 12 **July 1981**
Meaningful Names for Characters; The Full Circle; Berserkers; Zargonians; Ten Different Reviews; Sword of Hollywood; A Letter from Gigi.

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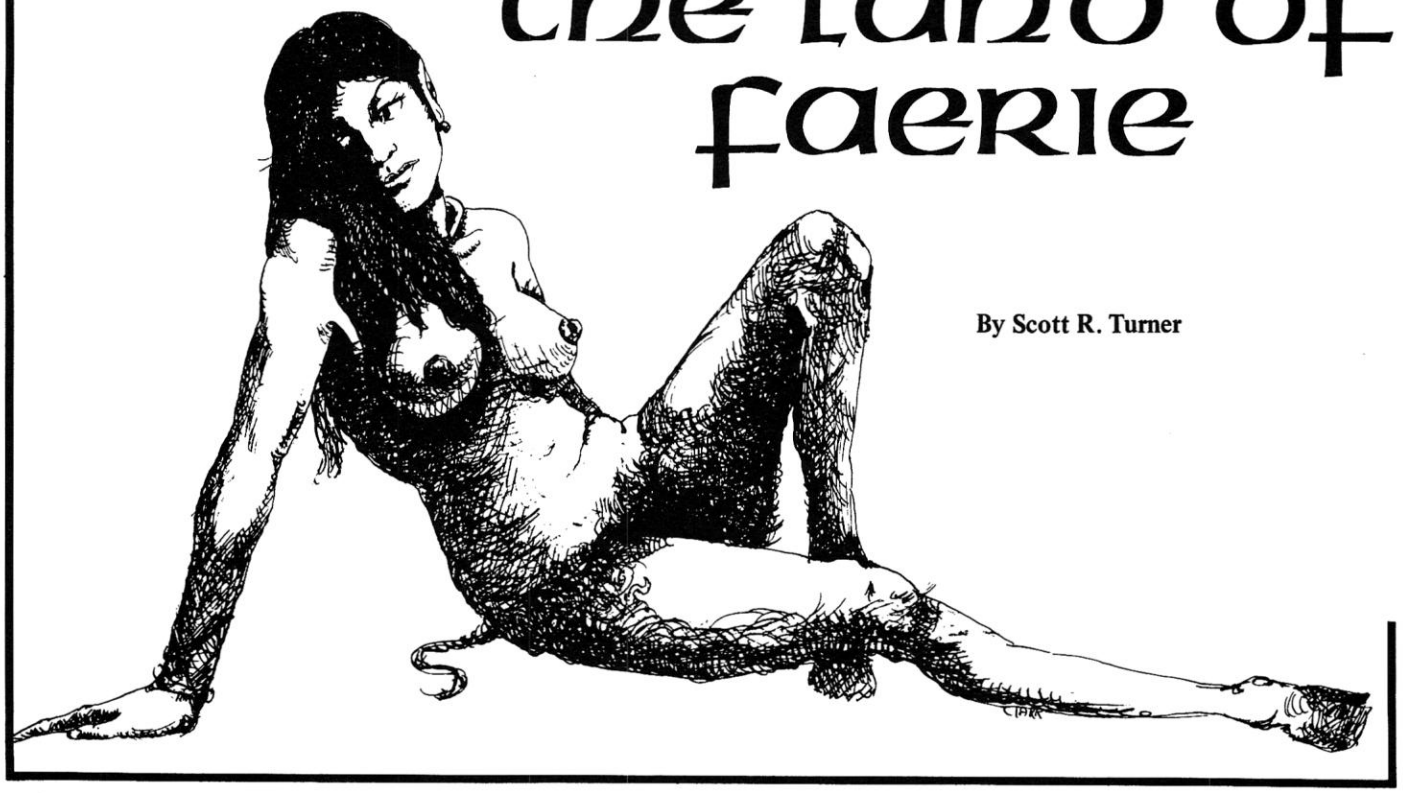
the land of faerie



By Scott R. Turner

Faerie is a land of bright colors, gay folk, and merriment. It is a thousand miles away; and everywhere a step away from reality. Fairy rings mark the spot where sprites have danced, and fairy knolls dot the moors. The inhabitants of Faerie are countless, and their ways an enigma. At times it seems they have nothing better to do than bedevil the Kindred Races.

GNOMES

Gnomes are the most numerous of Faerie's occupants. Gnome, like sprite and monster, is a generic term for an entire class of strange creatures. Amongst the fairies, distinction is made not upon the physical characteristics of a being (such as we distinguish between one- and two-humped camels) but rather upon the function the fairy fulfills. Thus a fairy might be a Bogan one day and a Blue Cap the next. Gnomes are the most earthy of the various fairies. They function as jesters and mischievous helpers. They are the children of nature, and while the various types of gnomes vary as to the typical activities, they are all of the class gnome and so share many features.

Physically, gnomes are small creatures. They range from finger-sized (so small they must struggle with a single grain of wheat) to two or three feet in height. In appearance they seem to be diminutive humans, though they may have deformities or in other ways vary from the norm (such as having wings). Gnomes generally appear to mortals as male, often as wizened old men or sometimes as young boys. Some gnomes have the power of shape-shifting, as we shall later note, and these gnomes can of course assume a larger size of different shape.

Green is the favorite color for gnomish clothing. The green is broken with occasional flashes of color, most particularly red though white and blue have also been noted. Dress is usually typical for the area the gnome appears in. A gnome about the farm would wear farm clothing, for instance. Gnomes seem to be fond of caps, in particular jaunty red ones. Other gnomes dress more somberly, in muted grays and browns. The hair of a gnome is most often unruly, and sometimes overly long. Occasionally the hair is brightened with a feather or flower. In general, the mode of dress is like that of a working man.

SPRITES

Sprites are a second class of fairies. Sprites generally appear to mortals to be mainly female, and not nearly as gruff or earthy as gnomes. If gnomes are children of the earth and woods, then sprites are the children of the air and flowers. Sprites too are distinguished by function, though some are noted separately upon the basis of appearance.

Sprites tend to be smaller than brownies, ranging from very tiny to about one foot tall. In appearance they are most often likened to young prepubescent girls, again with some variance, such as in the matter of having wings. Few sprites have the power of shape-shifting.

Sprites often cavort naked through the forest, and are almost always naked when seen dancing. At other times they wear light, flowing costumes. The favorite color for these is white. These dresses are sometimes decorated with spangles, tiny pearls and the like. Some sprites can be seen wearing clothes made from flowers and foliage of the area, as in Edward William Hopley's painting "A Fairy and a Moth," but this is not too common.

MONSTERS

The final type of fairy is the monster. These creatures are wildly varied and of every shape and size. Their purpose is to trouble the lonely traveler. They are usually non-intelligent, and so will be covered in more detail later.

Faerie is not an unorganized place. The inhabitants are divided into two camps, the Seelie Court and the Unseelie Court. "Seelie" means "blessed." The Unseelie Court is definitely evil. Their chief pleasure is to hurt or distress mortal man. The Seelie Court comprises the good fairies, but even the Seelie Court will take action against those who injure or insult them, though they will never do it wantonly.

Members of the two courts are not immediately distinguishable, and this makes traffic with fairies a dangerous enterprise. Even when dealing with the Seelie Court, there are rules of etiquette and various taboos that must be closely followed to avoid upsetting the fairies.

In dealing with the good fairies, the chief virtue is generosity. An unexpected stranger fed may well be a fairy. Boasters, braggarts, and liars will get nowhere with fairy folk. Merriment, cheerfulness, good fellowship, and fair dealing will also help win the favor of a fairy. Even if no immediate benefits accrue from such actions, it is wise to so treat the fairies because the gratefulness may make itself felt at some later, opportune time.

No one can endear himself to the Unseelie Court. The members of this Court are totally inimicable to mortal man. An evil man may try to deal with this type of fairy, but in the end he will always be betrayed. When a good man is forced to deal with the Unseelie Court, any weapons are acceptable. Bragging, trickery, and getting in the last word have all proven successful at one time or another.

Sloppiness, stinginess, and infringement of privacy are amongst the faults fairies consider the worst in mortal man. The most severe of these is infringement of fairy privacy, and many is the tale of misfortune of those caught spying upon the fairies. Similarly, any good fortune granted you by a fairy must not be spoken of lest the fortune instantly disappear. Other common punishments include illness, blights, and bad luck.

Many fairies have strict taboos which must be followed when dealing with them. For instance, Brownies must never be thanked nor paid for work they do or they will instantly leave and may even go so far as to undo what they have already done. Likewise, someone who marries a fairy bride may never speak of her fairy origins or give her three causeless blows, lest she leave him forever. These taboos vary from individual fairy to fairy. They are largely a personal thing, and there are no strict rules concerning them.

Fairy blood grows weak with the passing of time and so it is that fairies steal mortals away to reinforce the stock. Most often they take babies, leaving behind a stock (a wooden piece carved to the shape of a child and enchanted with a glamour) or a baby fairy. Such stolen babies are called changelings. Less often, an adult is taken to Faerie, usually because the fairies admire some facet of him, such as his musical talent or beauty. One major exception is the fairy midwife, where a mortal woman, usually older, is summoned to Faerie to act as a midwife for some fairy mother. Fairy midwives are allowed to leave when their services are no longer needed. Other captives are not.

Fairies (particularly those of the Unseelie Court) have sometimes a more gruesome reason for stealing mortals away to Faerie. Fairies are supernatural creatures that worship no god and stand outside the destiny of the world. They are a race apart, and in order to maintain this unique status, they must sacrifice mortal souls to the Devil every seven years. This is called the *Teind*, and it is during this time (i.e., once every seven years) that captives in Faerie can escape or be rescued.

When captive in Faerie it is important not to partake of the fairy food, because to do so infuses in the mortal some of the fairy spirit and prevents him from ever returning to the mortal world. Time is also important to a captive in Faerie. Time flows differently in Faerie than in the real world, and worse, with no real sanity. Thus, a single dance with a troop of fairies may take in the real world a year and a day. On the other hand, one may spend several years in Faerie and return to find that only a moment has passed. In most cases an inordinate amount of time passes by in the mortal world during visits to Faerie. In such a case, the returning mortal often crumbles to dust upon encountering reality, the suggestion here being that Faerie is a land of the dead.

There are, fortunately, a number of protections against the fairies, used particularly to protect babies, who are most subject to fairy raids. Probably the most numerous of these are religious artifacts. The cross, holy water, churchyard mold, scripture, and bells all afford some protection against fairies. Another class of wards are those generally useful against the supernatural. These include salt, running water, horseshoes, and cold iron. Some forms of protection are inexplicable: red berried trees, daisies, bread, the high tide mark, and self bored stones (stones that have been hollowed by the action of dripping water).

With all these forms of protection, it is a wonder anyone is ever bothered by a fairy. The answer seems to be that these protections are not one hundred percent effective. They are especially ineffective on nights sacred to the fairies (May Day, Midsummer Eve, and Halloween) and upon fairy ground (such as in a fairy ring or on a fairy knoll).

Fairies inhabit fairy knolls, which most often appear as small, rounded, grassy hillocks. In this form they are called a *knowe* or *sithien*. The interior is known as the *brugh*. Some fairies live in enchanted lands at the bottom of lakes; others inhabit magic islands across the sea. As a general rule, Faerie seems to coexist with the real world, but the interaction of the two is governed by odd rules with no apparent order.

Fairies have little trouble getting what mortals consider treasure. There are countless tales of mortal wealth bestowed upon those who have befriended a fairy. These range from chests of gold to unusual luck. Fairies themselves consider two of their possessions of great importance: fairy food and fairy ointment. Fairy food is wonderfully light and satisfying, being akin to the nectar of the gods. It carries with it the hazard noted earlier, namely that one who partakes of fairy food becomes infused with a fairy spirit. Fairy ointment is applied to one's eyes, and gives one the power to see through fairy glamour. Thus one can see the normally invisible sprites and gnomes as they go about their work or play. This is considered a great gift and can only be gotten through theft. If the fairies catch someone who has stolen and used the ointment, they will take away the eyesight of the offender. This ointment is applied to baby fairies, and so a mortal midwife will occasionally get some on her eye accidentally. When this happens, the fairies are usually kind enough to take away only the sight of Faerie.

Above all else the fairy are a flighty, fanciful people. It is necessary to treat them with all respect because though limited in power they have the endurance of an immortal (which they are) and will hound a person who offends them throughout his days. At times they will go to incredible lengths to help mortals, especially those who have helped the fairies. At other times they will be extremely cruel, killing without hesitation.

The morals of Faerie are different from our own and may well prove inexplicable to a mortal: when dealing with fairies, the buyer must beware!

A word now about the monsters of Faerie. The monsters of Faerie are the natural hazards of the countryside personified. At the bottom of the whirlpool lurks an Afanc. The wave that tosses a ship against the rocks is the work of the Blue Men. Other monsters are better known to the children: Bucca, who carries off crying children, Aud Goggie who lurks in fruit orchards, and many others. There is a monster in Faerie for every fear. Most are only cautionary, some are very deadly. For the most part the monsters of Faerie cannot be dealt with. They are too elemental in nature for conversation or bargaining. The best method of dealing with the monsters of Faerie is to avoid them; failing that one should remember well the local taboos and protections.

The tables provide lists of common gnomes, sprites, and monsters of Faerie. These lists are by no means complete, and are not meant to be used verbatim. Such creatures are highly dependent upon the gaming system used, and must be considered carefully by the Game Master before any attempt is made to integrate them into any existing campaign.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The best way to catch the flavor of Faerie is to read a good collection of tales or discussion of fairies. Recently a book has been published specifically on the topic, *Fairies* by Brian Froud and Alan Lee. This is a popular book, heavily illustrated, that makes a good introduction to the subject. More scholarly books are also available, in particular those by Katharine Briggs, which I have used as a final source in this article. Other important books are *Fairy and Folk Tales of Ireland* by W. B. Yeats, which is a collection of popular fairy tales, and *Hobgoblin and Sweet Puck* by Gillian Edwards, which is a more general discussion of Faerie. Reading of this sort will help flesh out any game played with fairies, and add much to their flavor and texture.

Briggs, Katharine. *An Encyclopedia of Fairies*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1976.

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Edwards, Gillian. *Hobgoblin and Sweet Puck*. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1974.

Yeats, W. B. *Fairy and Folk Tales of Ireland*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1973.

Popular books:

Fairies by Brian Froud and Alan Lee. A large, profusely illustrated book in the tradition of *Gnomes.*

Gnomes by Wil Huygen. The book that started off *Dragons*, etc. Not strictly applicable, but interesting.

The Leprechaun's Kingdom by Peter Haining. A limited but generally correct book. Deals mainly with solitary fairies and monsters.

GNOMES

ABBEY LUBBER – a minor demon sent to abbeys to tempt the monks.

BOGAN – a mischievous farm gnome. This type of gnome alternately helps and annoys the farmer, often doing more harm than good.

BILLY BLIND – an incorporeal gnome who "haunted" a particular house and gave good advice to those who lived there.

BLUE CAP – an industrious mine spirit who worked hard but unlike most other gnomes expected to be well paid for his work.

BOGGART – an incorporeal gnome of the poltergeist type. Untidiness is often blamed upon boggarts.

BOGIES – minor, stupid devils whose delight is to torment mankind, usually with practical jokes. These jokes are often quite dangerous to the victim, but a swift witted man can often trick a bogy.

BRAG – a goblin with shape-shifting abilities. The major type is a kind that can shift into a horse and perform annoying feats whilst in that form.

BROWNIE – so called for his brown hair and face. Brownies help out about the farm and in return are given each night a bowl of cream and good cake. One must be careful never to directly offer anything to a brownie, only leave it within his reach. To make a direct offer offends the brownie and will cause him to leave immediately.

BUTTERY SPIRITS – abbey lubbers who haunt poorly run inns.

COBLYNAU (koblernigh) – mine goblins who stand about 18 inches tall. They dress as miners, but are extremely ugly. They will point out rich veins by knocking, but will hurl stones and cause trouble if mocked.

FIR DARRIG (fir yaraga) – the Red Man. A gnome of about two feet who always appears wearing a red cap and coat. He asks travelers to be warmed by their fire, and is as dangerous to accept as it is to refuse, as he is very unpredictable. He sometimes demands a tale to pass the time.

FRID – a small gnome who lives under rocks and eats spilled food.

GOBLINS – evil, malicious gnomes, probably belonging to the Unseelie Court. A favorite tactic is to hold a goblin market, where they entice mortals to consume fairy food that will kill them.

HOBGOBLINS – goblins who are for some reason friendly to man.

PUDDLEFOOT – a brownie who works around the house but leaves puddles behind, ruining his usefulness. A sad little fellow.

SHELLYCOAT – a malicious, nasty gnome who lives in streams and wears a coat of shells.

SPRIGGANS – hunched, ugly gnomes somewhat larger than the average. They act as the bodyguard for the more defenseless fairies. They are also notorious thieves, and very dour.

URISK – a half-human, half-goat gnome. They herded cattle, did farm work, and haunted lonely pools. They are somewhat ashamed of their appearances, and long for company. They are considered good luck.

WAG AT THE WA – a gnome that appears as a grisly old man with a long tail. His special seat is on the pot hook in the fireplace, and he likes to sit there unseen and swing the hook back and forth, laughing at the merriment of the company assembled. He disapproved of strong drink, and would cough whenever any was opened.

SPRITES

ASRAI (water fairies) – a small sprite who lives in open water, and melts when taken away. The touch of an Asrai will burn and mark mortal flesh.

ELLYLLON – tiny, diaphanous sprites whose food is toadstools and fairy butter.

HENKIES – beautiful sprites who dance with a limp. Typical of sprites and gnomes who have one hidden defect.

HYTER SPRITES – small, sandy colored sprites with green eyes. They are responsible for rescuing lost children.

MELSH DICK – a rarity, a male sprite, who was responsible for the protection of nuts.

PORTUNE – an agricultural sprite that cooks frogs at night in the fireplace, which is why coals were left there. It also helps keep the house clean.

ROANE – these sprites are considered the gentlest of all fairy folk, and would never lift a hand against a mortal. They wear seal skins to travel through the sea.

TANGIE – a sprite of the sea who appears as an old man covered in seaweed.

TIDDY PEOPLE – nature spirits of the fen. Tiddy Mun (a particular fairy) is responsible for flood waters. Tiddy People are also responsible for fertility.

MONSTERS

APPLE TREE MAN – the oldest tree in an orchard. It has the power to talk at midnight Christmas Eve, and is very wise.

ARKOM SONNEY (Lucky Piggy) – a small white pig. Very hard to capture. If captured, it brings good luck to the owner.

AUGHISKY (the Water Horse) – a type of underwater horse. They left the water in November to gallop through the fields. If caught, they make excellent steeds, but if they smell the ocean they will at once gallop straight away into it, drowning the rider.

AUD GOGGIE – a cautionary, hideous appearing demon who would scare children out of fruit orchards.

BAOBHAN SITH (bavan see) – a succubus who kills her partner by draining all the blood from his body.

BARGUEST – a type of Black Dog that portends death.

BEAN-NIGHE (the Washing Woman) – a banshee that portends death by washing the clothes of the victim in a stream.

BLACK ANNIS – a tall, blue faced, white toothed hag who feasted upon babies. The sound of her grinding teeth can be heard for a mile.

BLACK DOGS – fairie dogs, large as a calf, black and shaggy with fiery red eyes. If anyone speaks to or attacks them they can blast with their eyes (apparently a life drain type attack).

BLUE MEN – mermen aligned with the Unseelie Court. Their main interest was wrecking ships. A ship could be saved if its captain could win a rhyming game with the leader of the Blue Men.

BOOBRIE – a gigantic water bird which eats sheep and cattle. The neck is three feet long, the bill a foot and a half.

BROWN MAN OF THE MUIRS – an elemental spirit that protects wild beasts. Possibly the spirit of Radagast the Brown (?!?).

CAIT SITH (cait see) – a fairy cat. Large as a dog, black with a white spot upon its breast.

CHURCH GRIM – a Black Dog that guards graveyards.

CLUTHNACH (kew-uch) – a cave dwelling stone giant. Quite noble, quite honorable.

CRODH MARA – fairy cattle, hornless and dun colored. A fairy cow may come into a herd of normal cattle and lead them off into a fairy knoll.

CU SITH (coo see) – a green fairy dog the size of a yearling bullock. Shaggy, long tail, and feet as broad as a man's. When hunting it gives three enormous barks that can be heard for miles.

FACHAN – a one eyed, one armed, one legged man. The arm sprouts from the center of the chest.

FIDEAL – an evil, feminine water demon. She is the elemental spirit of bog weeds.

FIR CHLIS – the Nimble Men who fight in the sky, i.e., the Aurora Borealis.

GWYLLION – half-goat, half-woman. They lurk about lonely paths and lure travelers away to die in the wilderness.

HERNE THE HUNTER – If one finds Hearne's horn in the woods and winds it, Herne and his Black Dog will give chase. The victim will be killed by an arrow from Herne, but no mark will appear upon the body. Herne himself is a demon of the oak and appears as a large man with stag antlers.

JACK IN IRONS – a gigantic skeleton in irons who leaps out upon wayfarers at night. Haunts lonely roads.

THE WATER LEAPER – a giant frog with wings and a tail instead of legs. It makes a shriek which startles fishermen into standing. The Leaper then jumps upon them, pulling them into the water and killing them.

MAROOL – a vicious, malignant sea demon. It takes the form of a fish with a crest of flickering flame and eyes all about the head.

NOGGLE – a beautiful grey little horse with a tail curled in a half wheel. If a rider mounts it, it will give them a dangerous ducking in some nearby pool.

NUCKELAVEE – a sea horse with but one eye and flippers instead of feet. Growing from the middle of its back is the upper torso of a man, with long arms that nearly reach the ground and an oversized head. The whole thing is skinless and extremely evil. It cannot cross running water.

BIG EARS – the King of all Cait Sith, a very evil demon. It can be summoned by performing the *Taghairm*, a ritual that involves the continuous roasting of live cats until Big Ears appears.

WULBER – a man with the head of a wolf and covered in short brown hair. It is benevolent and retiring, and usually lives in an isolated cave.

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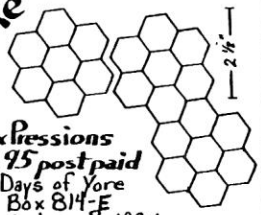

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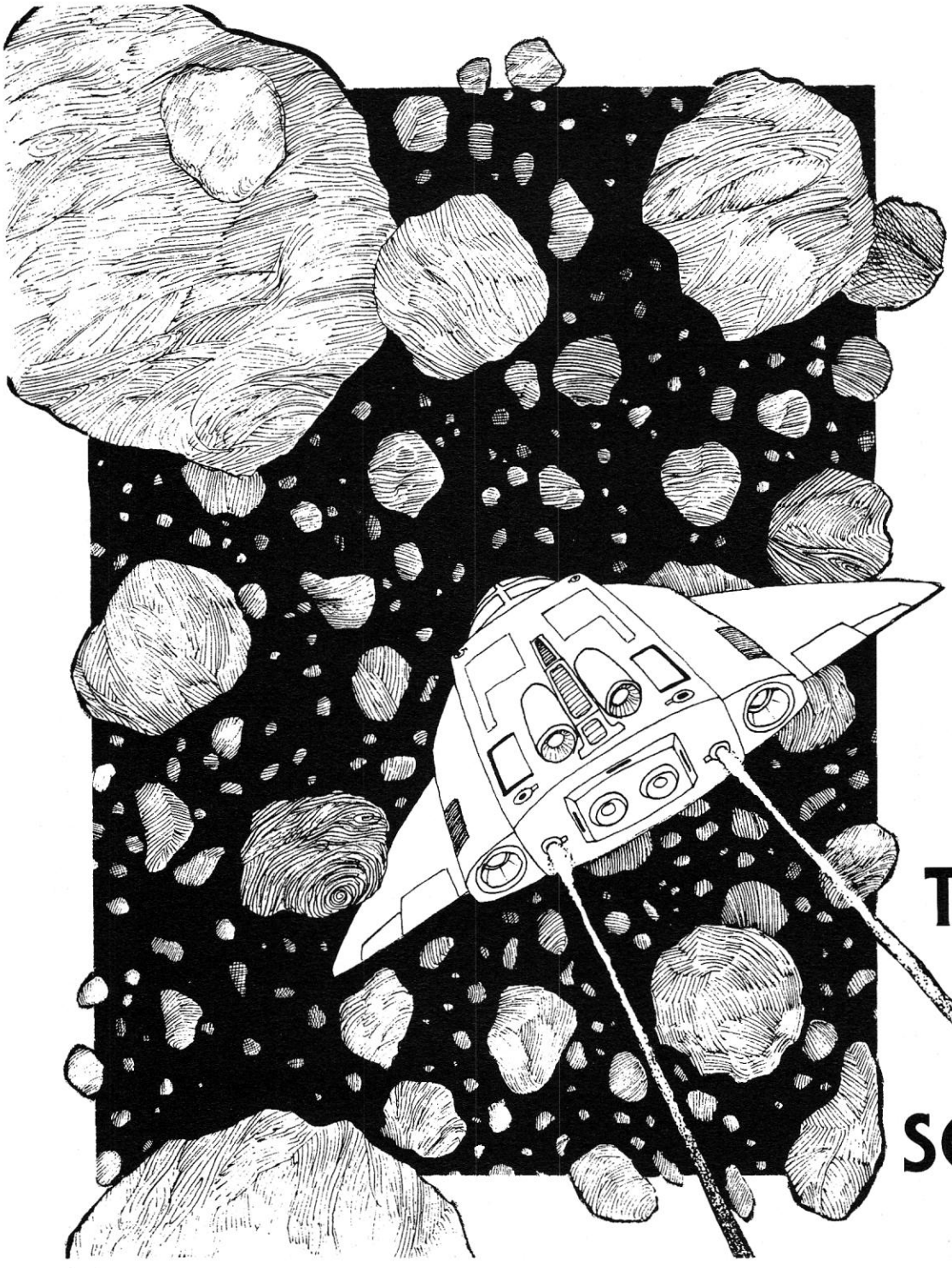


THE TRAVELLERS' AID SOCIETY

By Iain Delaney

In all the Imperium there is no organization, public or private, as well known and respected as the Travellers' Aid Society. No organization, with the exception of the Imperial government itself, has the scope, integrity, and sheer clout the Society holds within the Imperium. The Society is all the more amazing in the light that it is a non-profit organization with all funds being returned to the Society's members.

The **Travellers' Aid Society** was founded in the year of the Imperium 488; concurrent with the re-entry of Terra into the Imperium. This was a time of expansion in the Imperium, especially towards the rimward fringe. It was decided that an asociation was needed to assist adventurers exploring this new frontier, and a group of rich, ex-military adventurers founded the Society as a private adventuring club. Membership was first offered as a reward for heroism or extraordinary service in the military. Later on, membership was extended to all those who could afford it.

Membership in the Society is now available to anyone who can afford the Cr 1,000,000 fee. There is a possibility of being blackballed (4+ on two dice to avoid). An application for membership can be made only once during a person's life. If the application is rejected, the fee is returned and the person may never re-apply.

The advantages of membership are numerous. The most famous is the dividend paid to members each month in the form of a high passage ticket. Starflight tickets are a form of second currency in some parts of the Imperium, and high passage tickets are worth a great deal more than their cover price in some situations.

Another well known service of the Society is the Society hostels. They are found at all class A and B starports within the Imperium, and at some class A and B starports in areas adjacent to the Imperium. These facilities are first class in every way, providing the finest in food and lodging at comparatively low prices. Some are renowned as great restaurants in their own right; catering to the general public as well as Society members. The average price for food of excellent quality is Cr 60 per day, while the society hostels can offer food of approximately the same quality at just Cr20 per day. The accomodations and service in the hostels are also of the highest caliber. The hostels also usually provide a meeting place for adventurers and patrons. The hostel management generally runs a check on a prospective patron before he or she enters the meeting area, to determine the general purpose of the mission he or she is hiring for. If it is of an illegal or grossly immoral nature the patron will be politely dissuaded from entering, simply because the Society does not wish to be associated with any act that may damage its reputation.

Also available to Society members, at class A starport facilities only, is a supply store which has available all the highest quality equipment in the galaxy. This is available regardless of law or tech level. Equipment from any tech level is usually available in the store; and the law level of the planet is ignored because the hostel and store are considered to be within starport confines. Most specialized equipment is readily available to members, at standard or slightly increased prices. The Society, hostels, stores, and other services use Imperial credits as exchange.

One of the most secret services of the Society is starship rental. This is made available to a member only after stringent I.D. and character checks have been made. The general rental fee is Cr 100,000 per two week period (one jump). The price is increased slightly for armed ships, ships with specialized equipment, or ships' vehicles. No deposit is made, but if the ship is lost or damaged, the member pays for the loss from his personal fund, as well as from his high passage tickets; not receiving tickets until the Society is reimbursed.

The Society also keeps a reference list of lawyers who wish to make their services available to members. This list is available to members on request at any Society office and is very helpful when a member finds himself in legal trouble on a planet where he does not know the legal system.

The Society has existed for over 500 years and has become a well established part of interstellar society; maintaining contact with all known intelligent races, and most inhabited worlds. Members can expect to find after a little searching, a representative of the Society on all worlds in and around the Imperium; even Red and Amber travel zones. In the latter areas the representative is usually an undercover agent, acting as a contact for the Society members and a source of information for the Society.

As a news and information source the Society is second to none in the Imperium. Data is made available to the Society members and it is sold to regular news services to supplement the Society's income. A member may access this data at any standard Imperium news terminal by typing the Society's code number, and requesting "Traveller News Service." The news service also acts as a bulletin board for members; specific messages can be placed in the service to be relayed to one or more persons. The message is relayed when the receiving member's code number is entered, it is then wiped from memory. The code numbers are changed periodically and so far not even the Imperial security services have been able to tap the Society's private channel.

Also as part of the information service, the Society maintains up-to-date planetary and subsector charts of such detail that they sometimes surpass those of the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service. Of course these maps are available free to members and are sold to other sources.

The Society is such a well established institution that it publishes the TAS forms; which sometimes function as a second type of official registration. The forms are completed and notarized by a Society representative, and are recognized throughout the Imperium as official papers. This series is made available only to Society members and is a great deal quicker than going through regular Imperium channels.

The Imperial government regards the Society with grudging respect; it appreciates the services the Society provides for Imperial subjects, but is worried that the Society is becoming too powerful. The Imperial government seems to have a morbid fear of the unknown; and the fact that it has no idea where the Society gets some of its information terrifies the government. The Society is careful to do nothing that is even slightly suspect, so the Imperium can not act against it. The two exist in a state of mutual animosity, each mistrusting the other, but not being able to do anything about it.

The **Travellers' Aid Society**, and the services it provides, is something that no true traveller can do without. The size power, and scope of the Society make it a vital part of the interstellar society of the Imperium.

BOOK REVIEW

Role-Playing in the Land of Xanth

By Leonard H. Kanterman, M.D.

Xanth is a mythical realm, a portion of whose history is chronicled by Piers Anthony in a recently published trilogy of heroic fantasy: *A Spell for Chameleon, The Source of Magic*, and *Castle Roogna* (Del Rey Books, © 1977, 1979). Existing in a kind of "parallel universe," Xanth has a generally medieval-level technology, with one crucial caveat. In Xanth, not only does magic exist; it is all-pervasive. The flora and fauna consist exclusively of magical creatures; their more mundane counterparts are unheard of. Therefore, while creatures, griffins, and dragons are commonplace, horses, lions, and eagles are considered "imaginary." Anthony's whimsical sense of humor leans heavily on puns as he populates his kingdom, to the sheer delight of the reader. Thus, dogwood actually barks, flying fish fly, and shoe trees bear shoes, while loaves of bread grow on breadfruit trees and cottages are truly made of cheese.

Where do humans fit into the scheme of Xanth? In keeping with the principle that only magical beings exist in Xanth, each human being has a unique and special magical "talent." The talent is innately present, at birth, and requires no effort to learn or use. However, each individual's magic ability is limited to that one talent. Talents range from minor nuisances (projecting "booms," conjuring garter snakes, magical "hotseats") all the way up to what is called Magician-class magic: mastery of illusion, transformation of objects, creation of zombies. Naturally, the more potent magic is less common, being found in a few select individuals in each generation; the most powerful Magicians being the King and Queen of Xanth. Each talent is unique to a particular individual; magic never repeats in Xanth.

The humans of Xanth are largely confined to villages, with the extraordinary citizens (royalty, major magicians) having their own castles. The wilderness separating the areas of settlement are the province of their natural denizens, of both animal and plant varieties. The species of Xanth are subtly evolved to maximize their magical capabilities. Thus, the most dangerous trees are capable of projecting the most enticing scents to lure their victims. The "easiest" paths are usually the most fraught with danger. The only safe routes are magically-protected roads, which often have the annoying characteristic of being magic in a one-way fashion! Finally, the entire land of Xanth is protected from invasion from the barbarians of non-magical Mundania by an impenetrable "screen" or force-field.

Similar themes run through the plots of each of the three books. Each centers around a quest made by the protagonist, accompanied by his several allies. which results in numerous harrowing, yet

MAGICAL TALENTS OF XANTH

MAGICIAN CLASS MAGIC

Magician Trent – transformation of living things
Sorceress Iris – mastery of illusion
Good Magician Humphrey – information (one question answered in exchange for one year's service)
King Roogna – adaptation of living magic
Jonathan/Zombie-Master – creation of zombies
Magician Murphy – Murphy's curse (whatever can go wrong, will go wrong)
Dor – talks to inanimate objects

LESSER MAGIC

Crombie the soldier – perfect direction-finding
Grundy the Golem – translation of languages
Millie the Ghost – sex appeal
Sabrina (Bink's fiancee) – holographic imagery by song
Bianca (Bink's mother) – five-second replay
Roland (Bink's father) – stun gaze
Princess Irene – "green thumb" (instant, rapid plant growth)

MINOR MAGIC (village-idiot calibre)

Numbo – magic "hotseat"
Chilk – invisible wall
Jama – flying swords
Zink – appearance of holes in ground
Potipher – cloud of poison gas
Horsejaw – projecting booms

thought-provoking encounters. Each encounter serves to develop the protagonist's character as well as to explore interactions inherent in the nature of Anthony's system. It always seems that, if the protagonist had a slightly different talent, he would be able to deal with the situation in a facile manner. Instead, he is forced to resort to his ingenuity to determine the proper solution.

The first book, *A Spell for Chameleon*, details the quest of Bink, an immature 18-year old who is being exiled from Xanth because, it appears, he has no magical talent. Bink seeks advice from the Magician Humphrey, master of information, whose castle is protected from all but the most determined questioners by a variety of obstacles. Humphrey is capable of answering just about any question, but exacts the price of a year's service in return (hence the seemingly endless supply of monsters to guard his castle). Humphrey is able to discern that Bink has strong magic, but cannot reveal its exact nature.

Book two is *The Source of Magic*. In his challenge to restore an 800-year old ghost, Millie the maid, to life, Bink must uncover the source of all Xanth's magic.

The final volume, *Castle Roogna*, clears up many of the unexplained elements in the first two books (such as how Millie got to be a ghost for 800 years), by delving into the past history of Xanth. Bink's son, Dor, a powerful talent in his own right (the ability to talk to inanimate objects) and destined to be the next King, must embark on his own quest for the sake of his maturity.

The readers of *Different Worlds*, being in all probability devotees of both heroic fantasy as well as role-playing gaming, are sure to see multiple opportunities for incorporating elements of Anthony's world into their own systems. The final part of this article will be devoted towards a suggested adaptation of Xanth into a set of rules for the RPGer. These suggestions are not geared to any one system in particular, but hopefully will be of some value regardless of the reader's particular preferences.

Player-characters in Xanth have the option of being either humans or part-human mythical creatures (such as centaurs). While all characters will have their unique magic ability, that of the part-human creatures will be weak or incompletely manifest, keeping with the general rule of thumb that something either is magic or it has magic. Most of the characters will generally be of the fighter class, magic-users being confined to those few with Magician-class magic; there is no "organized religion" in Xanth, so no clerical types allowed. The Game Master should assist the player in determining his "level" of magical ability through a more-or-less random determination. According to the GM's designs, the specific ability can either be rigidly determined or left to the players, to choose from within a given range (for example, within a certain spell level when employing the *Dungeons & Dragons* system).

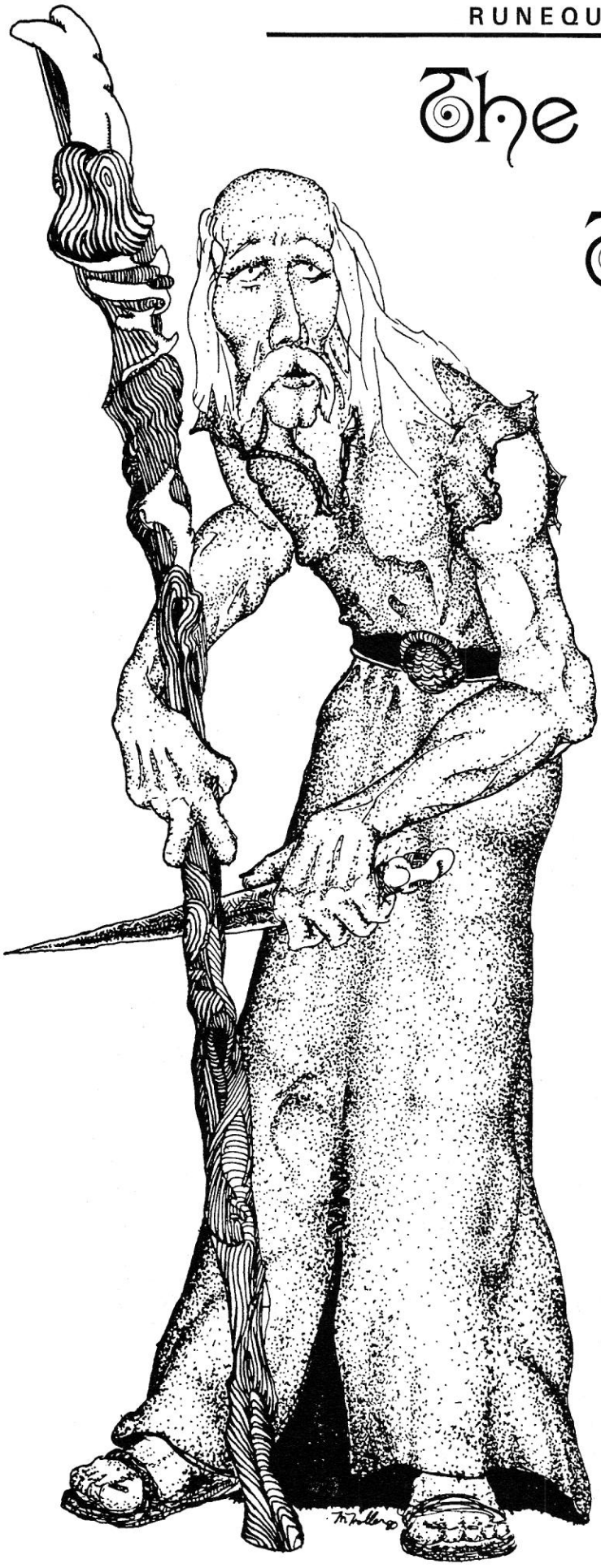
Each player character has this one, and only one, ability. He can use this ability repeatedly, with no expenditure of time or effort, as it is inherent to him. However, characters can never master any other magical talent. Offsetting this to some degree, players can employ enchanted or magically-endowed items freely, limited only by the inherent nature of the object. For example, magic rings, weapons, or items of apparel can be used repeatedly, while other items, such as potions, are consumed by their use. Enchanted items are fairly common, since Xanth is a magical land; indeed, the trades of some of Xanth's inhabitants involve utilizing their talents, making love potions or enchanting swords. Since magic never repeats in Xanth, an item enchanted by a long-past talent may be quite rare and valuable.

Although a player may employ his talent on an unlimited basis, personal growth in players should be encouraged by the GM, as it is in the novels. Thus, a character should be awarded only half the experience value of any encounter in which he directly employs his talent.

Perusal of the three novels by the prospective GM will yield a wealth of ideas for implementation in his own realm. Certain general features, such as the nature of the wilderness and the magically-protected roads, help set the scene; other major elements, such as the services of Magician Humphrey, can be lifted intact. The GM should keep in mind the persistent, yet unobtrusive, sense of humor exhibited by Anthony as he populates his world with various creatures, always remembering that only magical, and not mundane, creatures can exist in Xanth.

In summary, the Xanth novels take an intriguing premise and elaborately develop its ramifications. GMs and players alike should find the series enjoyable in its own right, as well as a source of inspiration for elements that can be easily incorporated into RPGing.

The Cult of Erlin the Harper



By Jane Woodward

MYTHOS AND HISTORY

BEFORE TIME

The names of the parents of Erlin the Harper are now forgotten, but it is known that Erlin spent an idyllic childhood learning to sing from the God of Sages.

After the War of the Gods broke out, Erlin learned it necessary to fight for existence. But he never enjoyed fighting, longing instead for the truth and harmony he knew as a youth. Wandering far in search of peace, he cared little for the tools of war, preferring instead to turn his bow into the first musical harp by fitting extra strings to it.

Although he played only a small role in the War, seeking mainly to avoid fighting and stay alive, he is known to have helped others. At one time he aided King Elf, for Erlin always loved the beauty and harmony of the woods; and on at least one occasion he aided the Mistress of Healing, for he always tried to help others by restoring harmony, peace, and health whenever he could.

SINCE TIME BEGAN

After Time began, Erlin was worshipped as the Father of Harpers. All of his followers joined in this search for truth and harmony (although some say it can be found from within), and all seek to bring these things wherever they go. The cult spread as the Harpers wandered, until it now covers the world. It is not powerful, however, for it does not seek power.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Followers of Erlin believe that after they die, they will spend a time of renewal and refreshment in a great hall in the midst of a beautiful garden, rejoicing with Erlin in perfect harmony and truth. They will then return to the world, to try and restore truth and harmony there. They look forward to this rebirth not as a weary load, like so many cults do, but as a joy and a privilege.

Harpers are never resurrected by choice, although if they are, they will seek to make the best of it. They are apt to chastise the person who arranged it, explaining that all life ends, and will avoid him in the future.

Dead Harpers hope to be buried in a beautiful ceremony of great joy and song, for the dead will rest awhile, and then return. Biers are heaped with flowers and foliage in season, but no marker is placed, as the living prefer to remember the dead in life and song.

NATURE OF THE CULT

REASON FOR CONTINUED EXISTENCE

The Harpers are much in demand, for they provide reliable news to isolated communities, and music for both sad and happy occasions. At times they also act as notaries, for a Harper will never lie.

SOCIAL/POLITICAL POSITION AND POWER

The Harpers wield no power at all, as such, and do not want to. However, they are known to sway public opinion with a well-worded song, and do not approve of corruption. Only a brave or foolish man would wrong a Harper, as it is likely that the deed will be sung throughout the land.

PARTICULAR LIKES AND DISLIKES

The cult dislikes discord, lying, and Chaos, but mostly Chaos, for it fosters the other two.

It disapproves of corruption in high places and will try to prevent it by use of subtle song and oratory.

It likes peace, truth, and harmony and tries to spread these with song and deed. A Harper will help anyone in trouble, although he would rather fight with words than blows. He will also heal people suffering from wounds of the body or the spirit, to the best of his ability, and seek no recompense.

Harpers are also interested in history, which they record in song, and knowledge of all kinds.

ORGANIZATION

INTER-CULT

The followers of Erlin are a scattered and independent bunch. There is little official communication, but songs and news are carried from one Harper Hall to another by the many wandering Harpers.

There is one central authority, known simply as "The Harper." He or she has the final word in cult disputes, and decides which songs, lays, and ballads to preserve permanently in the Harper Library. This post is permanent, and when The Harper dies, a new one is elected by a conclave of Harpers one year after the death. In the meantime, the post is filled by the Senior Harper Priest at the Harper Library.

In addition, any two Harpers who meet will find time to get away by themselves and exchange songs and news. In this way, most of what goes on in the world filters to the ears of The Harper in a surprisingly short time.

INTRA-TEMPLE ORGANIZATION

In any town with a population of more than one thousand, there is likely to be a Harper Hall (90% chance). This is run by one individual, known as First Harper, who is a Rune Priest, and is responsible for the hall, in much the same way that The Harper is for the cult as a whole. The population of the Hall is always quite mobile, and even the person with the title of First Harper is free to leave at any time if he can convince another Rune Priest to take his place.

CENTER OF POWER

There is no one center of power for this cult. If there were truly a place of perfect truth and harmony on this plane, they would have one there. But in this imperfect world, the Harpers are content to do without, and will try to create such a place wherever they go.

HOLY DAYS AND HIGH HOLY DAYS

The Harpers celebrate holy day on the day of the full moon, because it is as close to perfection as the days of the month can come – it is also conductive to singing and dancing all night.

The High Holy Day is the summer Equinox, which in this cult is entirely given to fesivities and public performances. Individual members are encouraged to perform by themselves for part of this time. They get paid in the normal manner for this, of course.

LAY MEMBERSHIP

REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN

Anyone can join as a lay member, without regard to race or financial status. All that is needed is a sincere wish to join in the search for truth and harmony, which will be testedby the cult with Divination. However, aplicants with low DEX, CHA, or Oratory are frequently encouraged to wait until they reach average before joining. This is simply because it will be very hard for them to be a Harper otherwise and that tends to induce discord.

REQUIREMENTS TO BELONG

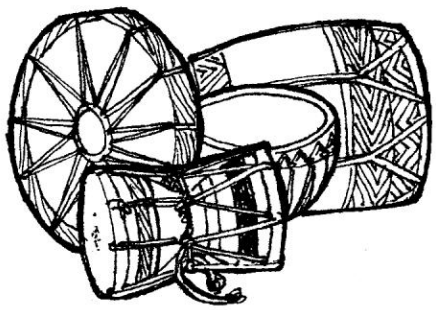
All lay members must learn to play a musical instrument. They must spend as many weeks learning the instrument of their choice as they do in learning any other cult-taught skill.

In addition, they must spend at least two hours a week working for the cult, in various capacities ranging from cooking to copying to doing inventory and sorting materials.

They are also expected to sacrifice one point of POW to Erlin during a time of song and joy each Holy Day.

MUNDANE BENEFITS

Lay members are allowed to sleep in the common room of the Harper Hall, and can also borrow up to CHA x 100 Lunars when they join the cult, to be used only for musical training (Make and Play Instruments, Sing, Dance, etc.). It need not all be spent at once, however. But after it is all spent, it must be paid back in full before any additional training can be obtained.



Drums

SKILLS

The Harpers teach many skills to both members and non-members (see Harper skills table). Many of the skills are familiar, but a brief explanation of the others is in order.

SPEAK OWN LANGUAGE: This involves teaching native speakers to be more eloquent. Included are several different dialects of each native language so that the speaker can be at home linguistically with any speaker of the language.

PLAY INSTRUMENT: Listed separately for each instrument on The Musical Instruments Table, this involves the playing of one specific instrument, in all its variations, and

the reading of the music for that one instrument. The instrument must be specified at the time the training begins, of course.

A person trained in an instrument is penalized -5% when playing an instrument not his own (due to non-standardization, which will be explained later), plays any other instrument in that family at half percentage, and has only the base chance plus Manipulation bonus to play an unrelated instrument. *Example: Lytha Brighteyes, a lay member, plays the recorder at 60%. She plays her instructor's recorder, which is larger, at 55%, the cross flute, another woodwind, at 30%, and the drum (unrelated) at 10% plus her Manipulation bonus.*

MAKE INSTRUMENT: The skill to make the instrument of the player's choice. This is mandatory if the player wishes to attain Rune status.

Making instruments other than the one specified falls under the same restriction outlined for Play Instrument above.

In addition, it should be noted here that finding and curing materials, as well as construction, take considerable time. This is up to the GM.

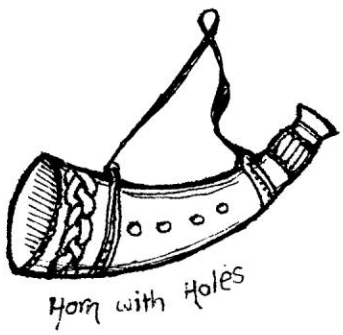
DANCING: Dancing is taught by type. These include Folk Dancing, Formal Dancing, etc. They too follow the restrictions for switching types (see Play Instruments). After a type has been mastered, (90% or Better), a new dance of that type can be learned the first time it is seen.

SINGING: This is the skill of using the voice. Projection, tone, strength, and color are all included. Unlike the other skills discussed so far, a person sings all types of songs at the same percentage, because the skills needed to control the vocal quality for interpretation of different songs are taught as part of this skill.

ACTING: This is the skill of being something one is not, and is the only kind of lying that the Harpers practice. As it is all being done in fun, it doesn't count, and the Spirit of Retribution will not appear as long as there is one other person present who knows who the actor really is. This restriction does not apply to non-cult members, of course.

SONG WRITING: This is the skill of reading and writing music, including such things as musical theory, etc. A person with Song Writing Skill can read music at this percentage for any instrument.

PEACE MAKING: This is the skill of "calming troubled waters." To use this skill, divide the Peace Making percentage by five, and subtract the total from 21. This remainder is called the Peace Factor. Then roll the Peace Factor vs the INT of each person fighting. Success means hostile intent was averted. Success with only one of them will earn an experience roll, of course, but it may not stop the fight. Success with both will. *Example: Lytha has a Peace Making ability of 35%. She attempts to break up an argument between Baltizar, INT 15, and Jason, INT11. Her percentage divided by 5 is 7. Subtracted from 21 leaves 14. She has a 55% chance of calming Baltizar but only 35% for Jason, who is not as bright and slower to see reason.*



BATTLE MAGIC

Lay members have the following special relations with battle magic spells.

Half Cost: Healing, Invisibility, Mind Speech, Coordination, Glamour.

Prohibited: None. In fact, members are encouraged to learn anything they possibly can.

INITIATE MEMBERSHIP

REQUIREMENTS FOR INITIATION

A candidate for initiation must be a lay member in good standing, have a sponsor who is already an initiate, and be able to play an instrument or sing at least at the 50% level.

He is required to give a performance before the Harper Priest, abstracted as CHA + Oratory + Music (instrument of singing) as a percentage. Success means the character is now an initiate. *Example: Lytha has a CHA of 11, 20% Oratory skill, and plays the recorder at 60%. She must roll 91 or less on percentile dice to join as an Initiate (11+20+60=91). If she had waited until her Oratory was 30%, she still would have been refused if she had rolled 96 or more.*

If a candidate is refused initiation, he may not apply until next season.

If a candidate is accepted, there is a party as well as the initiation ceremony, and the initiate is named a Minstrel.

REQUIREMENTS TO REMAIN INITIATED

Initiates are expected to search for truth and harmony, and do their best to create them wherever they go.

They are also required to spend at least three weeks of the year aiding a Rune Lord, Rune Priest, or on other business for The Harper.

In addition they sacrifice 2 POW points to Erlin and tithe 10% of their income to the cult to help cover expenses on the cult holy days.

The most important requirement, however, is that they may never lie, for any reason; although it is permitted to tread very carefully around the truth, if circumstances warrant.

MUNDANE BENEFITS

Minstrels are given free room and board at any Harper Hall. They may also call upon a lay member to help in any light task once a week (light here is defined as not likely to result in death or maiming). This is where the 2 hours per week that lay members work comes from.

SKILLS

Minstrels are allowed to learn the skills of Play Instrument, Make Instrument, Singing, and Song Writing at half cost, along with the same benefits given to lay members.

SPELLS

The same as for lay members, but minstrels may also purchase Mobility, Light, and Repair at half price. They have the usual opportunities to purchase Rune Magic, as well.

RUNE LORD MEMBERSHIP

GENERAL STATEMENT

The Rune Lord of Erlin, who is called a Harper, is a wanderer who searches the world seeking truth and harmony, and bringing them to all he meets. They are the Harpers most frequently encountered (Rune Priests are also called Harpers).

They usually do not settle in one place for more than a few days at a time.

Although they do not enjoy fighting, they are all masters of at least one weapon, for it is sometimes necessary to fight, as Erlin realized, and its better to be prepared.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE

The candidate for Rune Lord must have been a Minstrel for at least one season and have a POW of 15 or more. He must also have a 90% ability in Read Own Language, Play Instrument, Make Instrument, Singing, Song Writing, one weapon, and at least three of these skills: Speak Other Language, Read/Write Other Language, Map Making, Dancing, Listen, Oratory, Acting or Peace Making.

If all these requirements are met, acceptance is automatic.

RESTRICTIONS

A Harper must seek to create harmony and must never lie. He is also expected to protect all Minstrels and lay members under his care to the best of his ability – defending them with his life if need be.

Other than that, he is free to do as he likes. He need never ask permission to go on adventures as that is the main function of this cult.

He must still sing on holy days, of course, even if he is the only Harper around, and if he chooses to do this in a public place and people throw money at his feet, so much the better, he is expected to contribute half of this to the cult in that case. He also is expected to sacrifice POW as a Rune Lord normally does.

BENEFITS

A Harper is welcome in any Harper Hall, and can ask for up to seven Minstrels and lay members to go with him on any adventure (seven being the number of notes in an octave, of course). These must all be volunteers, for to force someone to go unwillingly would be to create discord. Once they have volunteered, however, they are under command of the Harper, and are expected to follow his orders exactly and at once, saving their questions for later, else the Harper is freed of his obligation to protect them.

RUNE PRIESTHOOD

GENERAL STATEMENT

The Rune Priests of Erlin, called Harper Priests, are more involved in the administrative and religious details of the cult. They spend a great deal of their time organizing things so that the Harper Hall can run harmoniously. They also write and preserve songs and teach cult skills.

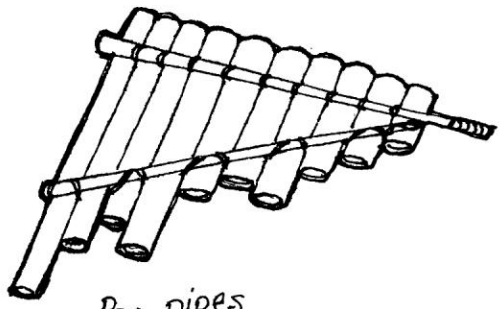
Although most DEX based skills go down to DEX x 5, as stated in the *RuneQuest* rules, those that Harpers teach do not and they can continue to rise in the normal manner.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE

All candidates for the Priesthood must have been Harpers for at least a year (that means Rune Lords!). They must also have at least an 18 POW, be able to Read/Write at least two languages at 90%, Speak their Own Language at 90%, and pass another performance. This is mostly a formality and is rarely failed. It consists of a song that the candidate must write and perform, and which states the reasons why he wants to become a Rune Priest. It can be abstracted as ((Song Writing + Singing + Instrument Playing + 3) + Oratory) / 2 as a percentage.

The GM may instead ask the player his character's reasons, then pass him or not according to what he thinks the cult would do (remember, the character cannot lie!). *Example: Lytha decides that she is ready to join the Priesthood. She has Song Writing at 130%, Singing at 120%, and has picked up the harp which she plays at 115%. Her Oratory is 95%. She adds the first three to get 365 (130+120+115=365). She divides this by three to get 121 (365+3=121.6, drop fractions = 121). She adds her Oratory to get 216 (121+95=216), and divides by 2 to get 108. She must roll this or less to get accepted. If she rolls 96 or more, she is refused of course.*

If refused, the Harper must wait at least a year before trying again.



Pan pipes

RESTRICTIONS

Unlike the Rune Lords, the Harper Priests are often required to stay in one place for months or even years at a time. This is because there must always be at least one Harper Priest at each Harper Hall who has accepted the post of First Harper. The others are free to leave at any time, but if First Harper wants to go, he must wait until there is another Harper Priest in the Hall, and then convince him to take his place (Oratory/5 vs Oratory/5).

The Harper Priest is also expected to keep the Library of the Harper Hall, aid First Harper (unless, of course, he is Firs Harper), teach the young lay members, Minstrels, and Harpers, and communicate important news to other Harper Halls, usually by sending a Harper or Minstrel in a pinch.

In addition, they have all the restrictions of Harpers.

BENEFITS

Harper Priests get the first pick of any materials with which to make their instruments and to make copies of songs. They may command anyone staying in their Harper Hall to perform for them at any time (a privilege rarely abused), and are welcomed with open arms into any Harper Hall.

They can also use Rune Magic, of course.

RUNE SPELL COMPATIBILITY

Due to the acquisitive nature of Erlin and his worshippers, all Rune Spells are available, as listed in the *RuneQuest* rules, with the exception of Summoning Elementals.

SPECIAL CULT RUNE SPELLS

CREATE IMAGE — Cost – 1 POW point

Range – 10 meters — Duration – While song lasts
Non- Stackable — Reusable

This spell creates a visual image of anything in a Harper's song. It will appear in three dimensions anywhere the Harper designates. Since the image is formed by the Harper's mind, it will reflect his impressions and interpretations of the song and not necessarily historical reality.

CURE MATERIALS Cost – 1 POW point

Range – Touch Duration – One day
Non-Stackable Reusable

This spell allows the Harper to cure the materials to make one instrument in one day, regardless of the time it would normally take. Accuracy is not increased, however, and he must still make a successful roll on his Make Instrument percentage. It takes a full day to do this and nothing else may be done during this time. It is also not quiet, as it consists of the Harper singing over the material. Proper material must still be used.

SING THE STORY Cost – 2 POW points

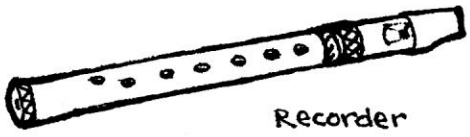
Range – Touch Duration – 2 Working hours
Non-Stackable Reusable

This spell is cast on a receptive audience, and it makes a beautiful map in the minds of the audience as the Harper describes a place he has seen (or is seeing). Note that the map will only be as accurate as the Harper's Map Making skill permits, but it will show, in remarkable detail, everything the Harper saw. All events taking place on the map song will also be available to the memory of the audience on a successful INT x 5 roll.

LISTEN TO ME Cost – Three points

Range – 50 Meters Duration – 30 Minutes
Non-Stackable Reusable

This is a special application of the Silence spell. It will stop all noise, except for the words of the Harper, in an area 100 meters in diameter. He must use the time to create harmony (stop fighting, etc.), not simply to quiet people down or gain an audience. As soon as he stops talking for more than 30 seconds, the spell will end, even if it has been in effect for less than a minute.



CHIEF PRIESTS

After a Harper has been a Priest for at least seven years or has 18 points of reusable Rune Magic, whichever comes first, he may become a Chief Priest at his own discretion. He must first discharge any obligations (he cannot be First Harper at the time, for instance) before he is free once again to roam the world.

A Chief Priest is no longer under the restrictions of a Harper Priest, but those of a Harper (Rune Lord) still apply. All his DEX based skills can be raised again. He can still use and acquire Rune Magic, of course.

It is from the ranks of these wandering Harper Priests that *The Harper* is chosen. The Harpers meet in a conclave in the main Harper Hall one year after the death of The Old Harper. There The Harper is chosen by acclaim, with all the Harpers present casting one vote each. The person so chosen must consent of his own free will with no persuasion, since the post is permanent. Being chosen, although a great honor, means that the Harper will have to stay in the main Harper Hall for the rest of his life, traveling only when the well being of the cult demands it.

SUBSERVIENT CULTS

SPIRIT OF REPRISAL: GLEOHELM THE TRUTHFUL

There is no reprisal for leaving the cult. If a person thinks that they can find truth and harmony in another place, it is their duty to do so. Special cult spells and Rune spells will not return after they are used in that case, however.

But a person who has once been initiated, whether he leaves the cult or not, may never lie. If he does he is immediately visited by the Spirit of Reprisal, Gleohelm the Truthful. Gleohelm looks like a tall, semi-transparent man with a harp and a staff, and he will appear and sadly inform the person being spoken to that the Minstrel/Harper is not telling the truth. This will continue throughout an initiate's life, and as Gleohelm is not corporeal, it wont do any good to attack him.

ASSOCIATED CULTS

THE GOD OF SAGES

During God's Time, the Sage God taught the young Erlin how to sing, and Erlin has never forgotten it. Whenever a Minstrel or Harper meets a Sage, he tells him all the news, just as they would another Harper.

In exchange, the Sage God has given Erlin the 1 point Rune Spell, Translate.

TRANSLATE Cost – 1 POW point

Range – Touch Duration – 15 minutes
Non-Stackable Reusable

This spell will translate all words touched by the user's index finger at normal reading speed (about 10,000 written words in 15 minutes) while the spell operates and leave an impression of the meaning afterwards, in a manner which will aid in translations of the same language/script.

MISTRESS OF HEALING

Erlin helped the Mistress of Healing in the God's War, and has been friends with her ever since. Many young lay members and Minstrels spend a great deal of time with this cult, learning various healing skills. Like the Trader's cult, the Harper will gift a healer with any healing plants he may have in his possession.

The Mistress of Healing has given Erlin two 1 point Rune Spells, Heal Area and Comfort Song.

COMFORT SONG Cost – 1 POW point

Range – Hearing Duration – Length of song
Non-Stackable Reusable

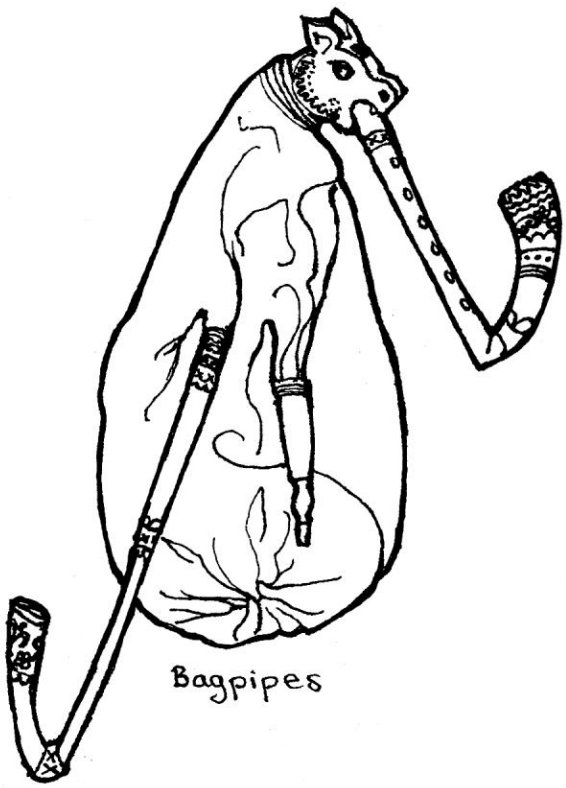
This Rune Spell allows the user to sing a Song of Power which will keep the hearer from feeling pain, effectively anesthetizing the body while still conscious. It is often used during childbirth and after battles.

HEAL AREA Cost – 1 POW point

Range – Touch Duration – Instantaneous
Stackable Reusable

This heals any wound in a hit location, including attaching a severed limb if within the normal time limit. When cast, it also requires the number of battle magic POW points equal to the damage to be healed for it to work.

Each use of this stackable spell divides the amount of POW needed by the number of spells used. If 2 points of the spell are used, the healer needs only half the number of POW points as there are points to be healed. If three spells are used at once, the healer only needs a third of the POW points, etc.



QUEEN ELF

During the Great Darkness, Erlin often helped King Elf, and spent much time in the forests. This is still true, and there are Harper Halls in many elf lands, for many worshippers of Queen Elf are Harpers, too.

From the King's Consort, Erlin gets a 1 point Rune Spell, Arrow Trance.

ARROW TRANCE Cost – 1 POW point

Range – Touch Duration – 15 minutes
Non-Stackable Reusable

This allows the user to merge himself with his bow, doubling his ability even beyond the 100% or 200% level.

The user is in a trance in which only his bow and his targets exist for him. He moves only to get a clear shot, or find another clear target in melee. He will use no other weapon and will not use the bow to parry or as a club. Even if an opponent is a meter away, he will shoot an arrow at him, the user taking any Defense he has. While in the trance, he will use only bow magic (Speedart, Firearrow, Multimissile) to the exclusion of all other magic, including Healing.

If the melee ends before the 15 minutes end, he will stand at rest and wait for targets. This is not a Berserker spell – the user knows who his friends and enemies are.

The user will ordinarily be taught to put on protective spells before activating this one, as he cannot use any of them after he has called on Arrow Trance.

For Harpers, this spell will also help the Harper concentrate solely on his instrument and singing, to the exclusion of all else.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

INSTRUMENTS

The cult's instruments are not mass produced, but are made individually by each Harper or Minstrel. Therefore, they vary widely in terms of material, decoration, and even design. One Harper may have a lute with two strings, and a leather soundboard, for example, while another favors one with 15 strings, a wooden soundboard with an elaborately carved soundhole, and an angled tuning box. However, they will both be called lutes, and both men will be able to play both instruments nearly as well, although the cost to create them will be quite different.

With this in mind, I am going to give you a list of the most common instruments, as well as their families, cost, and the basic percentages to make and play each one. However, when an instrument is chosen, be sure to be specific about how it is made.

Some of these instruments may be unfamiliar to some people, and others are different than their counterparts on Earth today, so I shall begin this section with their descriptions.

PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS: those instruments which produce a sound by striking them on or with some surface.

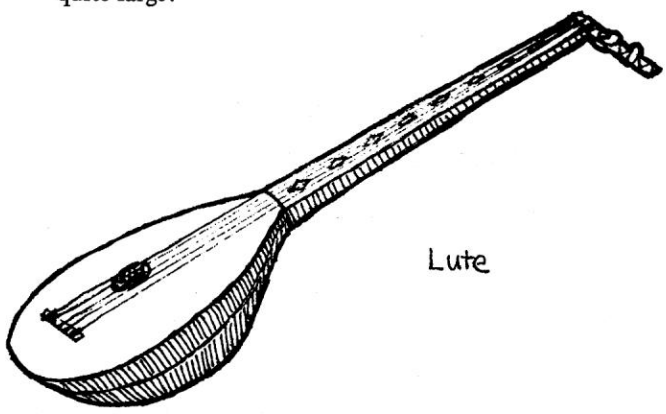
CLAPPERS: Two pieces of wood, bone, or bronze usually attached to each other with a piece of leather which are clapped together to keep a beat. Used in some forms of folk dancing.

CYMBALS: Slightly concave discs of bronze, with leather straps on the reverse (convex) side to aid in holding. They are clashed or brushed together to form a wide variety of sounds.

DRUMS: Bronze or wooden cylinders covered with a tightly stretched membrane made of vegetable fibers, parchment, or leather on one or both sides. They are played by striking the membrane with the hands, sticks, or small hammers.

TAMBOURINES: A wooden or bone hoop with a membrane stretched on one side and a number of tiny brass cymbals, bells, or rings attached to the hoop. It is played by tapping the membrane with the hand or some other part of the body, while shaking the instrument to sound the bronze. It is frequently used while dancing.

XYLOPHONE: Wooden or bronze bars of different sizes, each producing a different tone, supported on a frame, and struck with small hammers or sticks. They can be quite large.



WOODWINDS: Those instruments formed of wood or bone, and played by blowing air into or across them.

CROSS FLUTE: A wooden, reed, or clay pipe with up to nine fingerholes, which is played by blowing air across an opening on one side. The flute is held horizontally, usually to the right of the mouth. The tone produced is usually very clear and pure.

PAN PIPES: A number of reeds, hollow bones, or wooden pipes or tubes bound together. They are left open at the top, and may be either open or closed at the bottom. Each pipe is a different length and produces a different tone when air is blown over the top. The player passes the instrument quickly in front of his mouth, producing a bubbling, clear trill.

RECORDER: A pipe, usually made of wood, but sometimes of reed or bone, which has a fipple at one end (a whistle arrangement to help produce sound easily) and fingerholes. There are usually seven holes on the top, and one on the bottom, but this varies, of course. The player blows into the fipple and covers or uncovers the holes to vary the note.

REED INSTRUMENTS: Those instruments which produce sound by the vibration of small slivers of reed, bone, or quill.

AULOI: Double pipes, fitted together at a 40 degree angle. Each pipe has a double reed and from three to five fingerholes. The right pipe plays the melody, and is longer. The left accompanies on a higher note. They may be made of wood, reeds, or metal, and are normally quite shrill.

BAGPIPES: An interesting instrument, constructed of a pipe called the chanter with a double reed and fingerholes, one or more longer pipes called drones with a single reed each, and a small air pipe which produces no sound. All of these protrude from a bag or bladder made of animal skin, which is held under the player's arm. To play, the player blows air into the bag via the air pipe, and then rhythmically pumps his arm to force the air into the pipes, creating the sound. The chanter provides the melody, as the tone is changed by covering and uncovering the fingerholes, while each drone contributes a single unbroken note. Since the arrangement lets the player breath while the bagpipes are being played, the music is constant. It also tends to be rather loud.

DOUBLE CLARINET: Two pipes made of wood or reeds, with a single reed each, bound tightly together, and played as one. They may have up to five fingerholes each, or one may have up to seven, while the other has only tuning holes, which are stopped with wax, and acts as a drone. The tone is somewhat mellow.

Double Clarinet

SHAWM: A double reed pipe, usually made of wood, with a flared bell, usually made of bronze. There is also a disk made of bronze or wood that supports the player's lips and holds them away from the reed. The reed itself is normally mouthed entirely so that the mouth forms a resonator. The player breathes through the nose, producing an uninterrupted, piercing sound.

Horns: Those instruments made of bronze or animal horn which are blown through a mouthpiece shaped like a tiny cup to produce sound.

HORN: The simple animal's horn with a carved mouthpiece of bone or horn, or a more expensive bronze one. They sometimes have holes to vary the pitch but usually do not.

LUR: A bronze horn with a slightly conical long tube bent around and up and ending in a flat, disk-like bell.

TRUMPET: A horn with a long tube and a concave bell. The tube is usually straight but it can be curved in just about any direction or even around on itself several times.

ZINK: A horn made of animal's horn or wood shaped like an animal's horn with slightly square sides. It has fingerholes like a woodwind to vary the tone and is blown through a mouthpiece like any other horn.

STRINGS: Those instruments which produce a sound primarily through the vibration of strings made of gut, bronze, or silk.

HARP: An instrument made of a wooden sound box with a curve attached to the top end. The strings stretch from the sound box to pegs evenly spaced along the curve. There is frequently a pillar running from the bottom of the soundbox to the curve for added strength. (Harps that do not have a pillar are called angular harps, and the curve doesn't really curve at all). There are any number of strings, with more on the larger harps, but there are usually at least five. The player sits to play and rests the top of the soundbox on his shoulder holding the bottom between his knees, or his feet in the case of the larger harps. The strings are plucked with long fingernails, or more rarely, with the fingertips, and bass is played with the right hand, descant with the left. this means the harp is rested on the left shoulder, not the right as is usually the case with our harps. The tone is usually sweet and liquid. The tone of the individual strings cannot be changed, except by harmonics. (This involves touching the string lightly in the center while plucking it, creating a tone exactly one octave higher than the string. Extremely difficult to do, and almost impossible with the higher strings which are shorter).

LUTE: An instrument usually made of wood with a round belly like a gourd and a wooden or leather soundboard which may have one or more soundholes. There are at least two strings which stretch from the base of the instrument over a wooden bridge and up a long, narrow neck to the tuning box where they are wrapped around pegs that are tightened or loosened for tuning. The tone of each string may be changed by pressing it against the neck at some point, and cords may be played by changing the note on several strings. Sometimes extra strings may be used as drones, always sounding the same note. There is also a new fashion which consists of starting the strings at the bridge and setting the tuning box at an angle to the neck, but it is not very popular as of yet.

LYRE: A tortoise shell, or other hollow body, covered with a membrane as a sounding board. From the body of the instrument two animal's horns, or other long projections,

jut out, sweeping upward to be joined with a cross bar. Any number of strings run from the base, across a wooden bridge, and are attached to this crossbar. The sounds of the strings cannot be changed, except by the use of harmonics (see the explanation with the harp above).

VIBRATION INSTRUMENTS: Those instruments which produce tone by singing across or sucking a vibrating surface. Ability in these instruments is dependent on Singing ability.

JEW'S HARP: Wooden or bronze prongs with a sliver of wood, bone, or quill in between them to act as the vibrating surface. Tone is produced when the instrument is placed in the mouth and sucked. It may be varied by changing the dimensions of the vocal cavity as is done when whistling.

MIRLITON: A small pipe with a membrane attached to it. When the player sings into it, the membrane vibrates, creating an extremely nasal tone. In fact, it is just like our kazoo and is frequently used as a child's toy.

The price of all these instruments will vary according to the materials used, workmanship, size, complexity, etc. It also varies with the age of the instrument. Wooden instruments improve in tone with age, up to a point. When the wood or other perishable material begins to deteriorate, the value goes down. No instrument with a great deal of stress on it (as a harp would have, for instance) is much good after a few hundred years, except as a museum piece. In much the same way, reeds, leather, and so on will show adverse effects with great age.

A lay member in the cult usually (80% of the time) has the use of a borrowed instrument when he begins training. This has to be returned as soon as he successfully builds his own, of course, and if damaged will have to be repaired or replaced, at the player's cost.

All Play Instrument and Make Instrument training costs are the same for each instrument.

EARNING MONEY

In addition to adventuring, any lay member, Minstrel, or Harper may earn money in one of two ways. He may build instruments for sale or engage in public performances.

The materials needed to build an instrument cost one half of what the instrument would cost to buy. Some materials may be obtained or made by hand for "free," as explained in the section on Make Instruments. It is up to the GM to rule if the player is in a location where these things are available and to allow sufficient time for the process involved.

If a player successfully builds an instrument, he may sell it for the price mentioned in the rules – or try for more using his Bargaining skills, subject to the discretion of the GM.

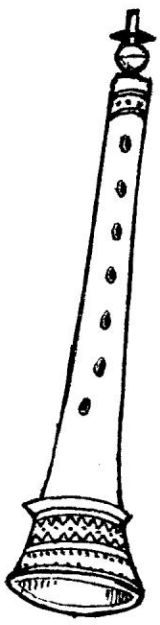
If he rolls an " impale" (20% of the roll needed, see *RuneQuest*), he has built an instrument of "fine" quality. This may be sold for twice the normal asking price. If he rolls a "critical" (5% of the roll needed) he has created an "excellent" instrument which is worth ten times normal.

If he misses his roll by 10% or less (for example, rolling 40% when he needed 30), he has made an instrument of "poor" quality. This would be worth half the usual asking price.

If he misses by more than 10%, he has failed to make the instrument. However, some of the material is still salvageable. Roll percentile dice to find out how much. When using salvaged material, pay for the unsalvaged portion and subtract 5% from the Make Instrument roll for using old material.

If he fumbles, nothing is left of the wreck he just made.

Example: Lytha Brighteyes has a Make Harp skill of 45%. She decides to build a lap harp, with a pillar and 21 strings. Final cost is decided to be 40L to buy such a harp, so the materials will cost 20L. She decides to economize by using strings she made earlier from a wolf's guts. This will take 5L



Shawm

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS TABLE

TYPE	*NAME*	*STR*	*DEX*	*COST*	*ENC*	*BASE*	*05-25*	*30-50*	*55-75*
Percussion	Clappers	–	–	1-5C	½	30%	50	100	200
	Cymbals	–	–	3-5L	1	10%	200	400	800
	Drums	–	–	5-200L	1-20	10%	200	400	800
	Tambourine	–	9	1-20L	½	10%	200	400	800
	Xylophone	–	–	5-500L	1-21	10%	200	400	800
Woodwinds	Cross Flute	–	9	1-50L	1	05%	400	800	1600
	Pan Pipes	–	9	1-5L	½	05%	400	800	1600
	Recorder	–	9	5-15L	½	20%	400	800	1600
Reeds	Auloi	–	9	5-15L	1	05%	400	800	1600
	Bagpipes	6	9	10-25L	2	05%	500	1000	2000
	Double Clarinet	–	9	2-10L	½	05%	400	800	1600
	Shawm	–	9	5-50L	1	05%	400	800	1600
Horns	Horn	–	–	1-5L	½	05%	400	800	1600
	Lur	6	–	20-25L	3	05%	400	800	1600
	Trumpet	6	–	5-15L	1-3	05%	400	800	1600
	Zink	–	–	5-15L	½	05%	500	1200	2500
Strings	Harp	6	9	10-200L	1-5	15%	500	1000	2200
	Lute	6	9	15-150L	1	15%	600	1200	2400
	Lyre	6	9	20-100L	2	15%	500	1000	2200
Vibration	Jew's Harp	–	–	5C-1L	½		As Singing		
	Mirliton	–	–	3C-1L	½		As Singing		

off the price, so she pays the 15L. The strings, by the way, took a season to cure. Wood would have taken two years. It is going to take three seasons to make the harp, waiting for the glue to dry, and so on. Three game seasons later, she makes her attempt. She rolls a 62, and fails. The pillar of the harp cracked, and the thing is useless. Rolling again for salvageable materials, she finds that 72% of the materials may be used again. This means that 28% of the material is not reusable. 28% of 15L is 4L and 2C (15x.28=4.2). She must pay this amount before she can try again. After another three game seasons, she is ready for the second attempt. This time, she has only a 40% chance of success because she is using material that has already been part of one failure. She rolls 09. This is good, but not quite good enough for a special skill use. So she has created a nice instrument, after having spent seven seasons (including the one for the strings) and 19L and 4C. She can now sell the harp for 40L or keep it to play herself.

Performances are handled in a different manner. First, the GM should roll percentile dice to determine the social class of the majority of the crowd listening or watching the show (this need not be done if this is already known, of course). Then he consults the Earnings From Performances Table to see how much cash is thrown at the feet of the performer(s) in the course of one day. Money is thrown only if the performers all make their rolls. Thus it is harder to perform in a group. I would not make the rewards any better, either, but that is up to the GM (The way I see it, if the farmer is going to toss one ear of corn, one clack if he is rich, he is going to toss one ear of corn or clack, no matter how many musicians are performing).

An "impale" will get twice the listed amount, and a "critical" will earn three times as much. A failed roll will get nothing but a few laughs. A fumble will get rotten vegetables, a dead rubble runner or two, and maybe even get the player(s) thrown out of town.

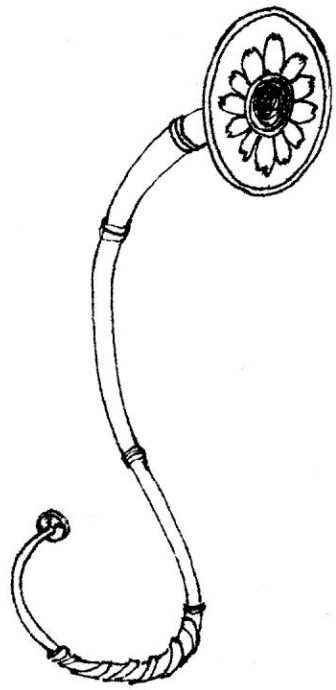
EARNINGS FROM PERFORMANCE TABLE

D100	*Audience*	*Earnings/day*
01-25	Peasants	1 D100 Clacks, food stuffs
26-60	Townsmen	½ D100 Clacks, 2D10 Lunars
61-85	Barbarians	1 D100 Claks, free meal
86-95	Poor Nobles	3 D10 Lunars
96-99	Rich Nobles	½ D100 Lunars
100	Very Rich Nobles	1 D100 Lunars

HARPER SKILLS TABLE

TYPE		*SKILL*	*BASE*	*05-25*	*30-50*	*55-75*	*80-100*
Knowledge	*	Read/Write Own Lang.	10%	100	200	400	800
	*	Read/Write Other Lang.	00%	200	400	1000	2000
	*	Speak Other Lang.	00%	300	600	1000	2000
	*	Speak Own Lang.	10%		100	200	400
Manipulation		Hide Item	10%	400	800	1600	3200
	*	Map Making	10%	50	100	200	400
		Dancing	15%	100	200	400	800
		Make Instrument		See Musical Instruments Table			
		Play Instrument		See Musical Instruments Table			
Perception	*	Listen	25%	100	200	400	EXP
	*	Spot Hidden	05%	100	300	500	EXP
Stealth		Camouflage	10%	200	500	1200	2600
		Hide in Cover	05%	200	500	1200	2600
		Move Quietly	05%	200	600	1200	EXP
Special	*	Oratory	05%	250	500	1500	EXP
		Singing	**15%**	**200**	**400**	**800**	**1600**
		Acting	**15%**	**200**	**400**	**800**	**1600**
		Song Writing	**05%**	**500**	**1000**	**2000**	**4000**
		Peace Making	**05%**	**250**	**500**	**1500**	**EXP**
Weapon	*	Bow	10%	150	400	750	EXP

* Costs double for non-cult members



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SAMURAI SWORDS

By Stephen R. Marsh

Samurai swords are the source of legends, both modern and ancient. Like any weapon in the hands of an expert, they are fearsome and deadly. In the hands of a person without the *chi* to handle the weapon they are dangerous to both friend and foe. The following essay lists the major swordsmiths by school, name, and time. It gives the comparative values and combat capacity. Any campaign using samurai deserve rich texture and detail. Hopefully this essay will help to provide this.

It should be noted that control/use of a sword is not based on ego/intelligence of the sword. Instead it is based on the inner strength of the user. This is determined by level. If a sword's bonus times three is greater than the level of the samurai, then it is more sword than he can handle (except those with ††).

Swords marked with an asterisk (*) are holy weapons adding greatly to their user's prestige. They are rarely (if ever) used in combat. Swords above a certain bonus are never used in combat! Instead they are considered great treasures.

Swords marked with a single dagger (†) are better than the rating implies and will usually have extra powers. The swords are magical and are as rare and as expensive as magical swords. They require aid from the shinto gods and part of the smith to forge. Instead of the usual critical hit system, I use the following: 75% chance hit did maximum damage, 25% chance hit did maximum normal damage, or double damage if that is greater. These occur only on a roll of +8 or greater than what is needed to hit.

Swords marked with a double dagger (††) are excellent blades but have no extra powers. These weapons do not have level requirements to use properly. Weapons without a measure of chi, or magic, in them cannot deliver critical hits. Bonus on the to hit is not also to damage. That means that a +3 sword is only +3 to hit, doing damage as either one- or two-handed weapon.

When a blade is acquired, there is a 75% (-5% per level) chance that it will only have a +0 bonus to begin with and will take 1-6 adventures per plus to regain them (for the samurai to gain harmony with his sword). Carrying more than a long sword and short sword (such as carrying three katana) is considered very, very gauche.

Some of the local campaigns use samurai/ronin quite a lot. A few are even set in Nippon/Cathay. In order to add more background to the games, I came up with the following list of smiths by province. The reason for doing this is that most samurai had strong regional preferences as to what kind of blade they used.

First I will cover the five major swordsmith schools. Most swords will come from these five provinces which produced 80% of the remembered blades.

THE BIZEN SCHOOL

The first group is known as the Early Bizen School.

	Founded (A.D.)	*To Hit*
Tomonari (founder)	1100	+5
Kanehira	1074	+4
Sukehira	1080	+4
Nobufusa	1070	+4
Takahira	1080	+4
Masatsune	1100	+4

The school branched into several styles with the following smiths:

FUKUOKA BRANCH		
Norimune	1180	+4
Sukemune†	1199	+3
Muneyoshi	1220	+3
Yoshifusa	1210	+3
Norifusa	1330	+2
Naganori (will hit monsters needing +2 to hit)	1300	+1

The temper lines of these smiths are straight, sometimes with decorative patterns. So are the temper lines used by the next branch of smiths:

YOSHIOKA BRANCH		
Sukeyoshi	1230	+3
Sukemitsu	1470	+0

These smiths used varied decorative patterns in the temper lines, including flowers, etc. Many minor swords come from this branch, but few with enough chi to count as magical.

OSAFUNE BRANCH		
Mitsutada	1240	+3
Kagehide††	1250	+3
Nagamitsu	1270	+3
Kagemitsu†	1320	+2
Sanenaga	1273	+3
Chikakage	1318	+3
Kanemitsu	1356	+3
Norimitsu	1394	+0
Motomitsu	1380	+2
Nagayoshi†	1350	+2
Nagashige††	1330	+1
Motoshige	1310	+3
Shigezane††	1340	+1

After this group of smiths, this branch changed to wavy temper lines.

Moromitsu	1400	+1
Yasumitsu	1400	+0
Morimitsu	1400	+1
Sukemitsu	1470	+0
Sukesada	1490	+0
Katsumitsu	1430	+0
Tadamitsu (will hit monsters needing +1 to hit)	1490	+0
Kiyomitsu†	1500	+0

YOSHII BRANCH		
Kagenori	1280	+2
Naganori	1310	+1
Kiyonori	1390	+0

OMIYA BRANCH		
Morokage	1390	+½
Morikage (full shadow)	1360	+1
Morikage (defending shadow)	1350	+1
Morokage††	1390	+1

The last two branches had few famous names but provided a flow of blades to samurai.

The next school is that of Sagami and it rivals Bizen as a center of famous blades. Depending on regional bias, most samurai will consider Sagami or Bizen as the best. When Minamoto Yoritomo established the first shogunate government in this province, it attracted many smiths from all over the country because of its intense military priorities.

THE SAGAMI SCHOOL

YAMASHIRO BRANCH	*Founded (A.D.)*	*To Hit*
Kunitsuna	1213	+3
Kunimitsu	1280	+3
Kunihiro	1340	+2
Kuniyasu††	1220	+2

BIZEN BRANCH		
Kunimune	1230	+3
Sukezane†	1250	+3

SOSHU BRANCH		
Yukimitsu††	1304	+3
Masamune†	1325	+6
Sadamune	1330	+3
Hiromitsu	1350	+2
Akihiro	1300	+2
Masahiro	1375	+0
Hiromasa	1375	+0
Tsunahiro	1658	+0
Yasakuni	1500	+0

Smiths of this school used the "swell" pattern (notare) temper (a gentle series of curves) and the full (hitatsura) pattern (irregular and almost blothcy). They produced many, many good swords for common use.

THE MINO SCHOOL

KANEUJI BRANCH	*Founded (A.D.)*	*To Hit*
Kaneuji	1320	+3
Kaneuji†	1340	+3
Kanetomo	1340	+1
Kanetsugu	1368	+0
Kanemitsu	1355	+0
Kanetsune	1400	+0
Kanefusa††	1400	+1
Kaneyoshi	1400	+1
Kanesada	1467	+1
Kanemoto	1440	+1
KANESHIGE BRANCH		
Kaneshige (Kinju)	1320	+2
Kaneyuki	1320	+2

The entire school declined for a period and then produced some great smiths, though the unnamed smiths were very poor and the blades prone to shattering. The blades were tempered with a zig-zag pattern, often designed to have a pattern to it (such as the three cedar zig-zag).

THE YAMATO SCHOOL

TOMA BRANCH	*Founded (A.D.)*	*To Hit*
Kuniyuki††	1250	+3
Aritoshi	1260	+2
TEGAI BRANCH		
Kanenaga	1288	+3
Kanenage	1290	+3
Kaneuji	1300	+3
Kanezane	1300	+1
Kaneyoshi	1400	+1
Kanetoshi	1365	+0
HOSHO BRANCH		
Sadatsugu††	1240	+1
Sadamune	1318	+3
Sadayoshi†	1317	+2
SHIRIKAGE BRANCH		
Norinaga†	1320	+1
Norinaga††	1330	+2
SENJU-IN BRANCH		
Yasushige	1000	+4
Yoshihiro	1350	+2

Most of these schools are named after major temples. The schools provided blades for the monks and the bushi (samurai) that they hired. The blades have a smooth, straight temper. Some also have choji notches. Intensification will be for monkish attributes. Also of Yamato School prior to its lapse and revival:

Amafuji*	750	+10
Amakuni*	700	+12
Amakura*	720	+8

The above swords are all unbreakable. They are also holy relics.

THE YAMASHIRO SCHOOL

SANJO BRANCH	*Founded (A.D.)*	*To Hit*
Munechika	987	+6
Yoshiie†*	1004	+3
Kanenaga	1087	+3
Kuninaga	1328	+3
Yoshinori†	1395	+1
AWATAGUCHI BRANCH		
Hisakuni†	1199	+4
Kuniyasu	1211	+3
Kunitsuna	1213	+3
Norikuni††	1222	+4
Kuniyoshi	1247	+3
Yoshimitsu	1264	+4
RAI BRANCH		
Kuniyuki	1293	+3
Kunitoshi	1293	+3
Ryokai	1288	+2
Mitsukane	1308	+2
Kunimitsu	1328	+3
Kunitsugu	1311	+3
AYAKOJI BRANCH		
Sadatoshi	1264	+3
Sadayoshi	1317	+2
Sadatsugu	1334	+0
NOBUKUNI BRANCH		
Nobukuni	1334	+1
Nobusada	1394	+0
HASEBE BRANCH		
Kunishige	1334	+2
Kuninobu	1352	+2
HEIAN-JO BRANCH		
Nagayoshi	1334	+1

These blades usually had notches in the temper though some of them adapted the swell pattern.

Other excellent smiths:

Bungo Province		
Choen	1184	+4
Joshu	1160	+4
Sadahide	1160	+4
Buzen Province		
Jinsoku	987	+10
Etchu Province		
Yoshihiro	1334	+5
Hoki Province		
Sanemori	950	+4
Yasutsuna	900	+5

The above smiths are enough to cover the major smiths who became famous during the "golden age" of the Japanese sword in a once over lightly fashion. Anyone who desires to research the subject further will find even more available than I have given here. A comment on the more potent swords (+6 and above): they are included in the national treasures and have

been for many years. With the exception of a Kikasaku blade, obtaining one requires doing structural damage to the vault/ museum kept in. This has been true since about 1467.

SWORD POWERS

The sword of the samurai, when magical, will cause a smooth breeze to blow whenever it is drawn. Held to the light and viewed along the grain, it will reveal (to the trained eye) the name of the true smith who forged the blade. In combat it may also reveal various powers. One power per plus to hit the blade has. Those with a single dagger (†) add one power or 10% to rolls. Those with double daggers (††) have no powers.

MINOR POWERS TABLE

1D100	Power
01-10	Coolness – the breeze that springs up is cool if the weather is warm.
11-20	Warmth – the breeze that springs up is warm if the weather is cool.
21-30	Non-rusting – the blade will not rust under normal strains.
31-40	Scented – the blade has perfume (90% clove oil, 10% other).
41-50	Glow – glows lightly indoors.
51-60	Mirror – functions as a mirror against gaze weapons 10% of the time.
61-70	Cutting – can be used to cut through stationary things.
71-80	Poem – has a poen implied when viewed.
81-85	Color – implies a color when looked at.
86-90	Non-bending – will not bend versus sai or staff.
91-95	Return – returns easily to scabbard.
96-00	Roll on Major Powers Table once.

MAJOR POWERS TABLE

1D100	Power
01-10	Enemy Detection – detects thoughts with hostile intent toward bearer (not directional).
11-20	Horse Control – the horse ridden by bearer will follow instructions regardless of fears, etc.
21-30	Calm – immunity (+3 on saves) to emotion spells.
31-40	Clear Sight – infravision and astral sight.
41-50	Read Poetry -- bearer can read poems in any language.
51-60	Animal Summoning – once a week summons one single hit die animal.
61-70	Swimming -- the bearer can swim with this out and wearing armor.
71-80	Hearing – will detect any noise nearby.
81-90	Non-slip – the sword will not slip from the grasp of user.
91-95	Non-shattering – the blade will never shatter.
96-98	Staff shattering – shatters staves used against it.
99-00	Roll on Extraordinary Powers Table once.

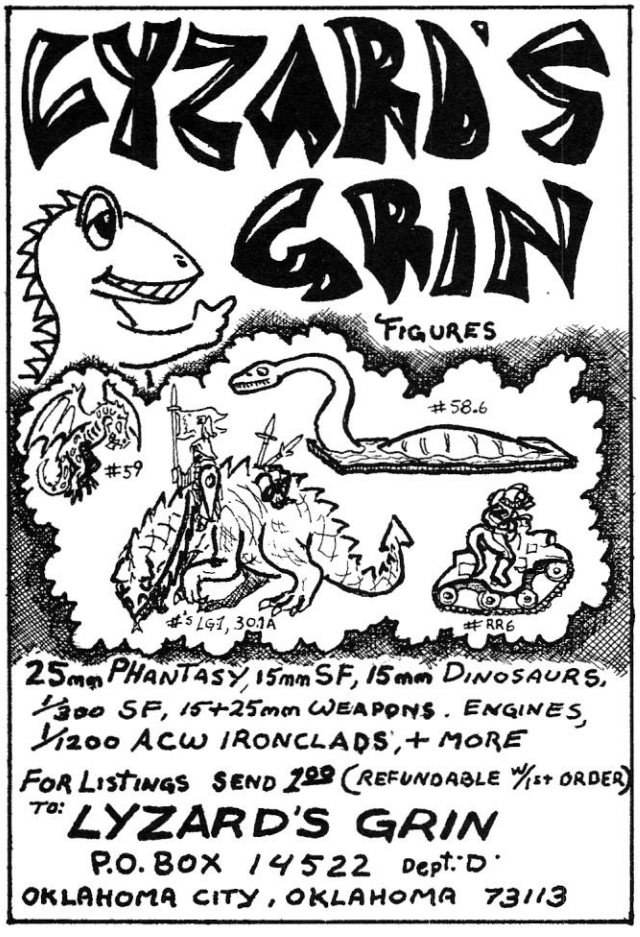
EXTRAORDINARY POWERS TABLE

1D100	Power
01-10	Tuning – allows the user to add his level as a damage bonus to his first blow in a melee.
11-20	Pairing – allows the use of two swords. Both swords will function as the better of the two.
21-30	Lightness – user becomes light as a feather (immune to all moral and paralysis problems).
31-40	Iaii – sword will spring from scabbard and strike on desire (+6 on initiative for one round).
41-50	Whirl – when cast into the air the sword will spin in place, doing double damage to any who advance into it. It will then fly back into the user's hand (if within 10').
51-60	Reincarnation – if the user dies he is automatically reincarnated – in spite of rings of regeneration, etc. If he fails his reincarnate roll (spell survival) he becomes one of the hungry ghosts (Japanese/Buddhist undead) and must be laid to rest.
61-70	Ghost Slaying – will slay any ghost hit.
71-80	Clairaudience – an extended form of the hearing power (as the spell, both clairaudience and hearing double range and chances).
81-90	Firmness – the user can become hard to dislodge, as if he were solid lead.
91-95	Bloody – the sword has slaying power, it will drag its user to a bloody death.
96-99	Sword Shattering – any parry will shatter the opposing sword (magic swords get a save as their normal save vs. magic with twice bonus added).

Thanks to Sean Summers, Ken Pick, Yumoto (author of *The Samurai Sword*), Ralnai, and every one else who helped with this work.

JAPANESE ROOTS FOR SWORD NAMES

aki – autumn
an – peaceful
ari – presence, existence
chika – near, intimate
cho – long
chu – loyalty
do – road
ei – lasting
fusa – tassel
gan – first
gi – duty
go – five, fifth, May
hachi – eight, eighth, August
haru – spring, govern
han – prosperous
hei – flat
hiro – broad, propagate
hisa – lasting
ho – treasure
hori – carve
ichi – one, first, January
ji – following
jo – a title
ju – resident of
jyu – ten, tenth, October
kage – shadow
kami – a title
kane – money, combine, wrap
katsu – victory
kin – gold, metal
ko – tiger
kore – this
ku – nine, ninth, September
kuni – country, province, land
masa – right, government, clear
michi – road
mitsu – light
mei – bright
mori – full measure, defend
moto – first
motte – with
mura – village
mune – reverent, sentiment
myo – bright
naga – long, lasting
nao – straight
nen – year
ni – two, second, February
nobu – trust
nori – rule, law
oite – at
rai – come
rin – code
roku – six, sixth, June
ryo – complete
sa – left
sada – upright
saki – tip
san – three, third, March
sane – real, straight
sei – make
sen – thousand
shi – four, fourth, April
shichi – seven, seventh, July
shige – heavy, prosperous
shoji – possession of
suke – a title, aid
tada – loyalty
taka – prosperous, high
take – fierce
tame – for the sake of
teru – shine
tomo – friend, code
tora – tiger
toshi – clever
tsugu – following, continue
tsukuru – make
tsuna – rope
tsune – constant
utsusu – copy
waka – young
yasu – peaceful
yoshi – duty, good luck, happiness
yuki – go, happiness



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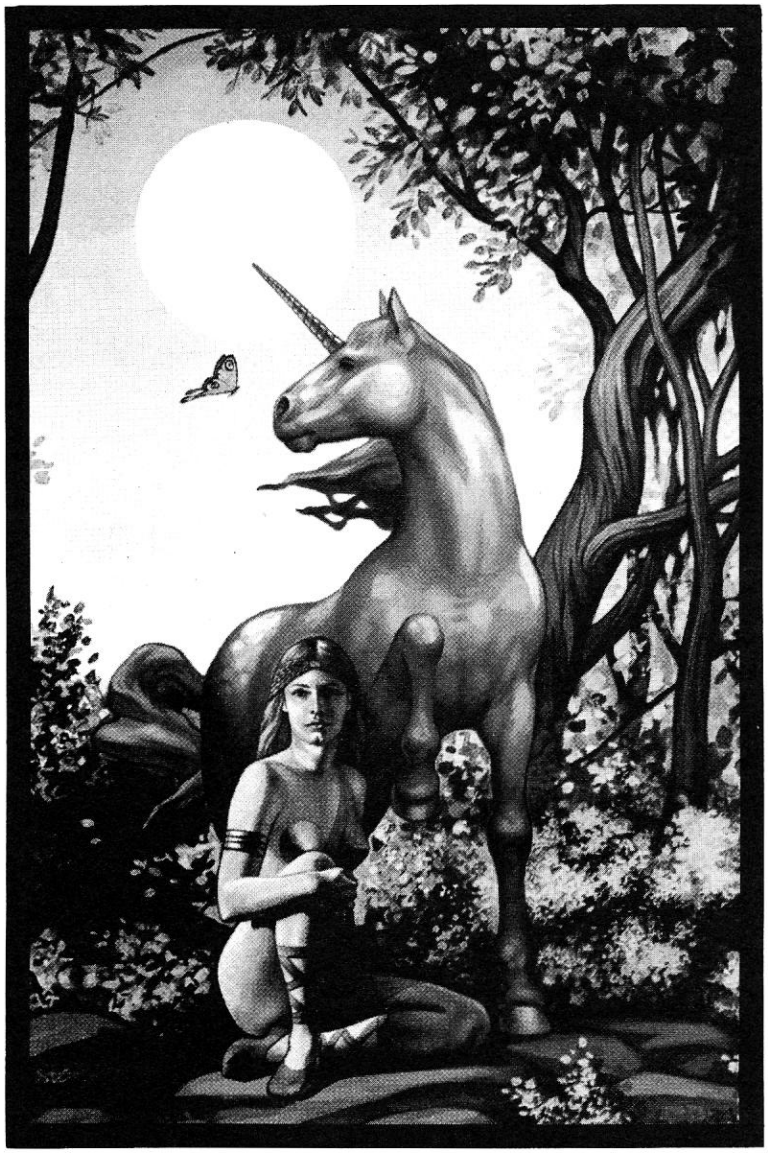

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SAMURAI FIGURES

BY *ARCHIVE*, *STAN JOHANSEN*, AND *RAL PARTHA*

By John T. Sapienza, Jr.

This issue features a review of Lee Gold's *LAND OF THE RISING SUN* the latest role-playing game set in feudal Japan, apparently a subject of continuing interest. So I thought we'd review three lines of figures appropriate to *LRS, BUSHIDO*, or other samurai games this time.

I am doing the lines in order of increasing size, because I think they illustrate the three most popular scales in the hobby (although 15mm is making strong inroads). The Ral Partha figures are in 25mm scale, the Archive are in 28mm scale, and the Stan Johansen are in 30mm scale. By this, I mean that on average the figures if standing up would be those heights as measured from the top of the head (discounting any hat or helm worn) to the bottom of their feet (not counting the metal base of the figure). Actually, it must be said that all the figures in these three lines are oversized, considering what they represent. The usual measure of scale is the number stated equals six feet – but a six foot tall Japanese in the seventeenth century feudal period would have been considered a giant! So to be properly to scale, all of these figures ought to have been sculpted several mm shorter, so that westerners on the same scale would be taller, (although perhaps westerners would not be *that* much taller, as they were shorter than we are today) but this is a minor criticism.

The Ral Partha line is called "The Samurai", and is by Dennis Mize. The figures are sold in blister packs containing six standing figures for $3.69, or three mounted figures (three riders, three horses) for $3.98. The exception to this is the Samurai Commanders and the Ifantry Standards, which are personality figures and come four figures to a $3.69 pack.

The *Ninja with Sword* (53-745) is a menacing, crouching figure completely shrouded in facemask and hood, baggy blouse and trousers, and leather boots. His sword is held ready in his right hand, the empty sheath over his back so as to be out of the way. Both hands have protective devices strapped around them (whose name I don't know) to guard the hand from harm should an opponent's sword get past the Ninja's guard. The figure is about 21mm from head to foot, 23mm overall.

The *Ronin with Sword* (53-751), or masterless Japanese warrior (a samurai has a lord, which gives him his social standing) stands in readiness for combat, with his Katana held in front with both hands. His left foot is planted well in front of his right, with both knees bent, ready to spring in any direction. His head, with hair bound in the traditional top-knot, is a fine study in arrogance. The ronin is unarmored, and thus wears only robes and sandals. His sword-sheath is partially hidden by his left arm, but sticks horizontally out back at his waist. The figure is about 25mm from head to foot, 32mm overall.

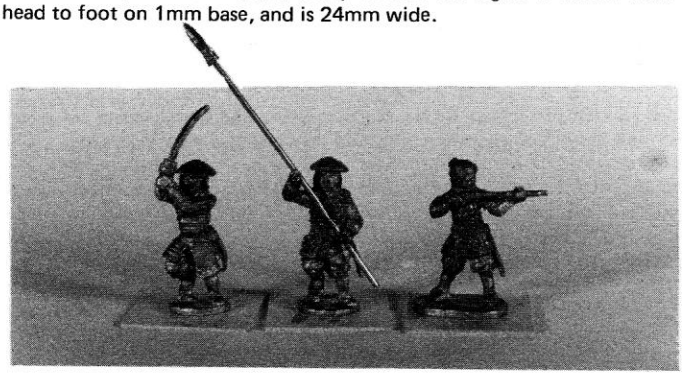
The *Ronin with Spear* (53-752) is similiarly unarmored, and is dressed like his companion with the sword. He has a katana in sheath thrust through his sash at his back, to get it out of his way. He holds the traditional Ral Partha spear, which consists of a stiff steel wire a bit under 1mm thick by 5cm long, with an 8mm point you glue on by sticking the shaft into a hole at the base of the point. This looks a bit out of place, the shiny steel wire contrasting with the duller lead of the figure, but when painted it looks fine. (I understand that the new model spear is cast in one piece.) The ronin wears the traditional top-knot on his slightly balding head, and is shouting a challenge at his foe. The figure is about 25mm from head to foot, 27mm tall by 55mm wide

The *Ashigaru with Sword* (53-756), or peasant warrior, wears a full suit of armor but is not as heavily armored as a samurai. (Ashigaru armor was cheaply mass-produced and of poor quality.) He has a bowl-shaped peasant's hat with a cloth hanging to protect his head and neck. He charges forward, yelling, with his katana held up to swing in both hands, its sheath thrust through his sash at his waist. The figure is about 25mm from head to foot, 32mm overall.

The *Ashigaru with Spear* (53-757), wears a full suit of armor covered in part by a straw rain cape, plus hat and cloth hanging. He has a sword in sheath at his waist, and carries his spear at the diagonal as he

runs forward. The figure is about 25mm from head to foot, 52mm tall by 35mm wide overall.

The *Ashigaru with Arquebus, Standing* (53-759) wears a warrior's top-knot on his partially-bald head, which is bound with a headband. He wears padded armor over his body and thighs, under which are his baggy trousers and boots. He has a sheathed sword at his waist, and holds his arquebus aimed and ready to fire. The figure is 25mm from head to foot on 1mm base, and is 24mm wide.



The *Samurai with Sword* (53-765) is fully armored for battle, as are all seven samurai and four samurai leaders; but each suit is different. He is holding his katana two-handed overhead at the beginning of a swing, his sword-sheath and wakizashi (shortsword) at his waist. The figure is about 25mm head to foot, 28mm overall.

The *Samurai with Sword* (53-767) is fully armored, and is charging forward with his upright katana apparently newly-drawn from its scabbard, since he is holding his scabbard steady in his left hand. He has no wakizashi. The figure is about 25mm from head to foot, 33mm overall.

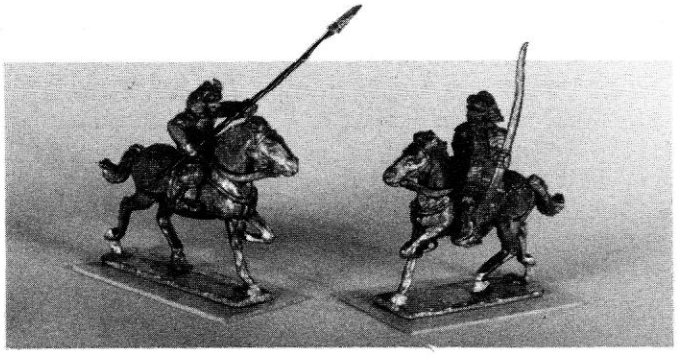
The *Samurai with Spear* (53-768) is fully armored, and stands with spear ready, his bristling moustache framing a shouted challenge. His katana hangs from his sash on a cord at his waist. He has no wakizashi. The figure is about 23mm from head to foot, 26mm tall by 50mm wide.

The *Samurai with Naginata* (53-770), the Japanese sword-bladed spear, is fully armored. He stands in a crouching position, on guard, with the naginata held on the diagonal. His eyes are almost hidden under his helmet, but his lips and moustache form a scowl. A wakizashi is thrust through his sash, but no katana. The figure is about 23mm from head to foot, 35mm tall by 30mm wide overall.

The *Samurai with Bow* (53-772) is a fully armored archer who holds a small quiver of arrows that is fastened to his belt, ready to draw an arrow on command, and holds his bow ready in his left hand. He has neither katana nor wakizashi. The figure is about 25mm from head to foot, 33mm overall.

The *Mounted Samurai with Spear* (53-775) is fully armored, but his horse is unarmored. He carries his spear crosswise in both hands, as if getting ready to stab to the left side. His katana is sheathed and thrust horizontally through his sash in front; he has no wakizashi The figure is 45mm long, 38mm tall from base to head of rider and 50mm tall counting the spear, and 48mm wide because of the spear.

The *Mounted Samurai with Bow* (53-777) is fully armored; his unarmored horse is the same as for the samurai with the spear. He rides with bow ready in his left hand, his right on his waist-quiver ready to draw at need. He has a wakizashi thrust through his sash, but no katana. The figure is 45mm long, 40mm tall from base to head of rider and 50mm tall counting the bow, and 27mm wide.



The *Samurai Commanders* (53-780) are four different fully-armored samurai, but more fancily dressed than the others, particularly in their headpieces. Two carry swords, one a spear, and one a naginata. None of them, interestingly enough, wears the two swords of a samurai. This was done because of the difficulty in casting the two swords on the figures, and is basically a minor point. One looks very much like a Japanese demon, his helmet looking like a full head of long hair pierced by two long straight horns. His face is distorted by a hideous grimace, and he holds his sword high in his right hand, gripping its sheath in his left. The other samurai with a sword stands in a similiar posture but looks more human, if grim. Both are the effect of faces sculpted on samurai helmets to make them look fierce. This samurai wears a helmet decorated with a crescent moon. The two swordsmen are about 25mm from head to foot, and 36mm overall. The figure with spear stands with his spear held upright in his right hand with its butt on the ground. His left hand is on his katana's sheath, thrust through his sash at his waist. The figure is about 26mm from head to foot, 57mm overall. Both he and the samurai with the naginata have moustaches, and the latter's helmet seems an artificial representation of the warrior's knotted lock of hair. He stands with his naginata held at the ready in both hands, while his katana is sheathed and thrust through his sash, partially hidden by his tunic. The figure is about 25mm from head to foot, 29mm tall and 36 mm wide overall.

The *Infantry Standards* (53-786) are four figures, two each of two designs. Each seems to be based upon the earlier ashigaru figures, since they wear light armor, pantaloons, and boots like the ashigaru swordsman, and one even wears the same hat and cloth head covering. Both stand about 25mm from head to foot, and carry staff banners that make the figures 46mm tall overall.

The showing of *Shogun* last fall created great interest in things Japanese, and sales of the Ral Partha samurai figures have more than doubled, so they are in the process of expanding the line. Figures, being released in 1981 include the follow

ding the line. Figures, being released in 1981 include the following:

53-747 Ninja with Short Bow
53-748 Ninja with Kusarigama
53-752 Ronin w. Spear (Remake)
53-753 Ronin with Naginata
53-758 Ashigaru with Naginata
53-761 Ashigaru with Arquebus, Kneeling
53-762 Gun Shields (for Arquebusiers)
53-766 Samurai with 2H Sword
53-771 Samurai Attacking with Two Swords
53-776 Mounted Samurai w. Sword
53-782 Mtd. Samurai Commanders
53-784 Ronin Captains

Future plans for the line include up to 50 packs, including equipment such as war drums, cannon, etc., so that eventually the gamer will have enough to field an entire Japanese feudal army. Questions concerning existing or future figures in this line should be sent to Dennis Mize at the Ral Partha address at the end of the column, with a stamped, self-addressed envelope for a reply.

The "Samurai" line in the Archive catalog actually contains only three samurai figures, the rest being peasants, monks, and such. Apparently, the title of the line was to provide a category clue instead of being intended as a literal description. The figures are slightly larger than the Ral Partha line, averaging about 28mm from head to foot, and corespondingly heavier. This is, in fact, the "large 25" size used by other companies and can be used with actual 25's without much difficulty in play, although care must be used in selecting figures to be used in dioramas. Archive's President, Neville Stocken, sculpted all these figures except for the Samurai Swordsman (402), which is by Steven Lortz.

The prices given are for blister packs containing the number of figures indicated. However, recently Archive has started packaging figures in Dealerkards consisting of a dozen or so figures sealed in plastic, designed to be cut and sold, so you may be able to buy these figures individually by the time you read this review.

The *Japanese Monk* (S401) costs $2.95 for a pack of three. It is a man with short hair and a moustache standing on guard with a rough stick used as a staff, held in both hands on the diagonal, as he looks to the left. He wears a broad peasant's straw hat, a jacket open to show his bare chest, trousers, and what appear to be sandals. (His right foot is quite short, and he may be clubfooted.) A dagger or short sword is thrust through his rope belt. On his back, he wears a squared-off pack that may be made of woven reeds. The figure is about 26mm head to foot, 30mm tall by 34mm wide overall.

The *Samurai Swordsman* (S402) costs $3.59 for a pack of three. This is a fully armored warrior crouched slightly as if awaiting attack, with his right foot forward and his left back and bent, ready to spring. He holds his sword in his right hand with the tip just above his right foot. He has neither scabbard for the sword nor the wakizashi that normally accompanies it, however, and the sword he has does not look like a katana. The blade is too heavy at the tip and the grip is too short for use as a 2H sword — it looks like he's using a cutlass of some sort. An effective figure nonetheless, and well detailed, it is about 26mm from head to foot, 29mm overall.

The *Samurai Woman* (S403) costs $2.95 for a pack of two (this may be a typographical error in the catalog, since all the rest come three to the pack). She is described as coming with the naginata and weapons, but my review sample came only with the naginata. This consisted of a steel wire and a swordblade tip with a groove instead of a hole to glue the wire into. I have doubts of the durability of this arrangement, and would prefer to see it changed to a few millimeters of hole to grip the wire more securely. In addition, the blade simply is the wrong shape — it is thick and heavylooking, when it should be a graceful curved swordblade. The naginata is 61mm long. The figure is an attractive lady in heavy robes, standing looking right and holding her naginata in that direction. This is, incidentally, an appropriate weapon for a female samurai, and is still a respected martial art for women in Japan today. The figure is about 28mm head to foot, 30mm tall by 66mm wide overall.

The *Yakuza (Gambler) Drawing Sword* (S404) costs $3.59 for a pack of three. He comes with a separate, optional, peasant's round hat, without which he appears baldheaded and wearing a headband tied around his forehead. With his hat on, he looks exactly like the Japanese Monk, except that he wears boots instead of sandals. And instead of a staff, he has a katana which he is in the process of drawing from its sheath, which he holds in his left hand. The figure is about 26mm from head to foot, 30mm tall by 30mm wide overall.

The *Armored Samurai* (S405) costs $3.59 for a pack of three. This is a fully armored samurai warrior with an elaborate helmet including a crescent moon, probably indicating high rank. His expression could either be anger or grief, depending on how you look at it. He comes with long and short swords, and his hands are positioned to hold them both for two-weapon combat. Neither weapon is very convincing, unfortunately. They are blunt-tipped, single-handed weapons with western-looking handles, rather than the Japanese sword styles one would expect. And they seem rather too thin for durability in gaming. There is room for improvement here from Archive. (In the meanwhile, you might consider purchasing some of the Stan Johansen weapons packs described later in this column for use with the Archive figures. They are not a bad match for size and are more authentic.) But don't pass up the Archive figures themselves, for they are well done and attractive. This figure is about 28mm head to foot, 33mm overall.

The *Ronin* (S406) costs $3.59 for a pack of three. This is an unarmored warrior in robes and sandals. He has his hair tied in the traditional topknot, and over his back is slung a round straw hat. He is in the process of charging forward, and his hands are curved to grasp the long and short swords that come with the figure. The figure is about 29mm head to foot, 33mm overall.

The *Ninja* (S407) costs $3.59 for a pack of three. The figure's head is entirely hidden in its masking hood with eyeholes. He wears padded armor covered by a tunic, and sandals. Over his back is slung his sword in scabbard, and a small backpack. He appears to be in the process of hauling himself up a rope, from his position. The figure is about 26mm head to foot, 30mm overall.

The *Ashigaru* (S408) costs $3.59 for a pack of three. It is described as coming with weapons and naginata, but the Dealerkard my review sample came from had the long and short swords, no naginata. This is particularly unfortunate, as this figure is positioned to hold the naginata and not the swords. The figure wears a round hat which appears to have metal studs for protection, and to have a chainmail screen hanging from it to protect his head. He is wearing light armor which may be chainmail but probably isn't very typically Japanese, particularly for a peasant. He wears greaves on his legs but no protection for his arms. The figure is about 26mm head to foot, 32mm overall.

The Stan Johansen Miniatures line is called "Shogun Warriors, Japanese Samurai." They are in 30mm scale because the line dates back to the period when 30mm was the most popular scale, and apparently the company sees no point in doing it all over again in a smaller size. Unlike most metal figures these days, the Johansen figures are available individually, and cost $.85 for standing figures and $1.75 for mounted figures, which is reasonable enough. All of these figures were sculpted by Stan Johansen.

Most of the figures in this line come with a standard weapons group, to simplify packaging, and to save space I'm going to describe that ahead of time instead of repeating it for each figure. You may assume the figure comes with these unless specified otherwise. The group consists of your choice among a drawn katana, a drawn wakizashi, or a crossed sheathed pair of katana and wakizashi to go at the figure's waist, plus a bamboo spear. The katanas are nicely shaped and molded, the wakizashis less so, being too blunted and a bit too short, in my opinion. Not all of these weapons are appropriate for all figures, and the user should remember not to give a peasant two swords, for example, which was forbidden behavior in Japan.

The *Armoured Bowman* (JS001) is a fully armored warrior standing with bow drawn ready to shoot, a quiver of arrows strapped to his back. The bow consists of a steel wire, which is to be bent into a curve to produce the slender Japanese longbow. I found it unattractive, personally, and suggest that you might use an emory board to file down the rough parts of the bamboo spear in the standard weapons pack to make a bow. You could then use the wire as an arrow. This figure also has a molding problem that was common among many in the line — the hands were not given sufficient space to hold their intended weapons, and require shaping with hand tools. This should not be the case, at least not as much as was true with my review samples. It is possible, however, that the samples were from the end of a run and not as well molded as typical. This might also explain some of the faces, which seemed almost smoothed over on some of the sample figures, a problem I've had with another line. This simply shows that it pays to examine the figures you buy in the store carefully before paying for them. The armored bowman is about 31mm head to foot, 34mm overall.

The *Heavy Infantry with Matchlock* (JS002) comes with the only disappointment among the accessory weapons in the line. The matchlock was a thin, unconvincing piece of metal, very surprising when compared with the good job done on swords, bows, naginatas, etc. This really ought to be resculpted to bring it up to the overall level of quality of the rest of the line. The figure is a fully armored warrior running forward, holding his matchlock in his right hand. You could easily substitute a sword there if you are looking for a differently posed swordsman. The figure is about 27mm head to foot, 30mm overall.

The *Samurai Defending* (JS003) stands with arms partially spread, presumably in the act of parrying a blow. (With a little care, you could always bend the arms to a different position.) He is fully armored, and is about 30mm head to foot, 33mm overall.

The *Samurai Attacking* (JS004) is fully armored, and stands with arms spread, right at the beginning of a swing with his sword. It should be noted that each of the fully armored figures has different armor designs, based on research in Japanese history. This figure is about 31 mm head to foot, 34mm overall.

The *Samurai Standing* (JS005) is appropriately titled, as he is doing just that - - standing in full armor with his hands at his sides. He wears an unusual pointed helmet, a slightly backward-leaning conical affair, and has a wakizashi thrust through his sash (which makes the crossed scabbarded swords in the weapons accessories superfluous). The figure is about 31mm head to foot, 39mm overall.

The *Samurai in Robe Defending* (JS006) stands leaning slightly forward and slightly to the left, with his (or her, the figure is somewhat ambiguous, even if it is flat-chested) hands up, fists clenched. Neither hand will hold a weapon in this condition, so it is puzzling just what the samurai is doing. The figure's hair is done up in a conical hairdo that looks like either a woman's decoration or a parody of the warrior's traditional toplock. All in all, I have difficulty taking this figure seriously. Remember, however, that this could be reasonably used as either a martial arts figure or a mage. It is about 30mm head to foot, 35mm overall.

The *Peasant Advancing* (JS007) is unarmored, and is dressed in jacket, pantaloons, and boots, plus a floppy conical hat. His arms are positioned to hold the bamboo spear of the standard weapons pack ready to thrust, the first of several figures in the line using spears. The figure is about 32mm head to foot, 38mm overall.

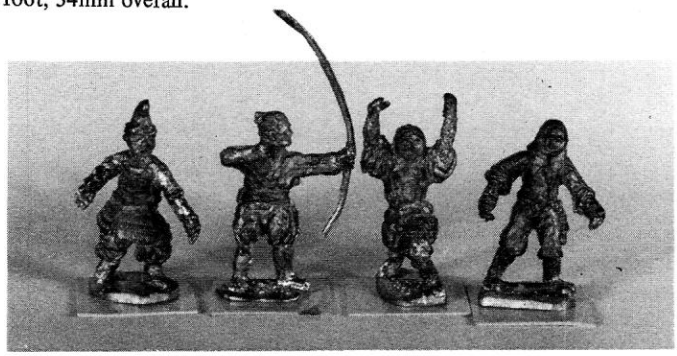
The *Peasant Standing* (JS008) is also unarmored, and is dressed somewhat similiarly to the other peasant, but this one wears the traditional round peasant hat. His right hand is curved to hold a weapon upright. His left hand is at his waist, and is also hollowed for a weapon, raising questions as to just what is supposed to be held there, since peasants were forbidden to carry or use two swords (and the two-weapon mode of combat probably was a skill not learned by peasants, anyway). The bamboo spear is too knobby to fit the hole. The figure is about 33mm head to foot, 36mm overall.

The *Light Infantry, Running* (JS009) wears partial armor protecting chest, abdomen, and thighs, but not arms and legs (and the conical hat doesn't look like much protection, either). He wears pantaloons and boots under the armor and a long-sleeved shirt, and has a wakizashi thrust through his sash. Unlike some of the other samples I received, this one shows a fully-molded face, including the eyes (a feature often left blank by sculptors) and a moustache. This is one of the best detailed figures in the line. It is about 30mm head to foot, 37mm overall.

The *Peasant Bowman* (JS010) stands with bow in hand (it is molded as an integral part of the figure) in the act of shooting. He is unarmored, dressed in bulky sleeves and knee-britches, possibly a form of padded armor protection, with only sandals on his feet. He has a warrior's topknot on his head, and a quiver of arrows strapped to his back, with a wakizashi thrust through his sash. The figure is about 34mm head to foot, 54mm overall. Even in 30mm scale, this guy is *big*!

The *Ninja Attacking* (JS011) has a hooded mask and appears to be wearing robes of some kind over padded armor. He is running forward with both hands upraised, possibly holding a weapon in each hand. He comes with a heavy scimitar and a sickle instead of the standard weapons group, and has a rope attached to his belt coiled around a hook. The figure is about 30mm head to foot, 38mm overall.

The *Ninja Standing* (JS012) is similiarly dressed and equipped, but stands on guard instead of attacking. The figure is about 31mm head to foot, 34mm overall.



The *Monk Attacking* (JS013) might be easily mistaken for a ninja, with his head hidden in a hood-mask and wearing robes and sandals. But he holds a naginata or spear or other polearm, from the position of the figure. The figure is about 31mm head to foot, 35mm overall.

The *Monk on Guard* (JS014) is similiarly equipped and posed. This figure has a more distinctive headgear, with a flattened hood and fancy ties on the front of his robe. (Incidentally, monks are like other non-samurai classes, they are generally not entitled to wear the two swords.) This figure is about 31mm head to foot, 35mm overall.

The *Samurai in Light Armor, Attacking* (JS015) is wearing a sort of half-helmet plus light body armor and greaves for his legs, but his arms are bare. The figure is posed to carry a spear, and is about 33mm head to foot, 35mm overall.

The *Weapons Pack* (JS016) offers a choice of weapons for those who are dissatisfied with the ones supplied with a given figure. It contains two bamboo spears; a quiver of arrows; a metal-tipped spear (which needs a bit of filing on the blade to make it look properly sharpened); a naginata that is nicely proportioned as to blade, but which could use about another cm of handle; a nasty-looking poleaxe whose Japanese name I don't know; a sodegarami, which is a trident-like affair used to pull riders off their horses; and a nodachi, the katana's big brother.

The *Mounted Samurai* (JSC01) is a fully armored warrior mounted on an unarmored horse. He comes with the standard weapons group, and has a double quiver of arrows strapped to his back. The figure is 52 mm tall and 50mm long.

The *Mounted Samurai Firing Bow* (JSC02) is also fully armored and in addition to the standard weapons group comes with a separate quiver of arrows and a bow, which he is posed to hold in the act of shooting an arrow. Both mounted figures come with the same horse, a standard money-saving practice in the industry, but a bit monotonous. This figure is 54mm tall and 50mm long.

The samurai line is one of the oldest lines in Stan Johansen's catalog, so old that the figures were actually sculpted directly in metal when the molds were made, instead of today's use of epoxy materials. They were designed eight years ago, and probably do not represent the current quality in either design or execution that Stan is capable of today – a comparison these figures and the more recent science fiction line would reveal that. The age of the line explains its large scale, once the most popular in the hobby. Although the company plans a line of 25mm figures sometime in the future, this line will continue in production for as long as there is demand, for sentimental reasons as much as any other, I suspect, from a conversation with Stan. Despite criticisms made of individual figures, I consider these attractive in their own way, and they should paint up well.

The Johansen figures face a problem of buyer prejudice in favor of smaller-scale figures, since these 30mm size figures look quite large when placed next to a 25mm figure. On the other hand, this was once the standard size in the industry and may be again, if the current trend to produce figures called 25 mm, that in fact are oversize for that scale, continues. Of course, this trend is faced by a counter-trend in the form of the increasing number of 15mm figures being produced by such companies as Martian Metals and Ral Partha. The 15's are very useful for people who want to accumulate armies of figures cheaply, or who need to use them on small hexgrid maps such as those used in *The Fantasy Trip*. The 25-30mm size is easier to paint in detail for individual characterization for use in games that don't need armies. So I believe that the "large" and the "small" figures will co-exist as two different hobby scales, instead of forcing one or the other off the market.

Further information, and complete catalogs, can be had by writing to the manufacturers of these figures:

ARCHIVE MINIATURES
1111 S. Railroad Ave.
San Mateo, Ca. 94402

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5938 Carthage Court
Cincinnatti, Ohio 45212

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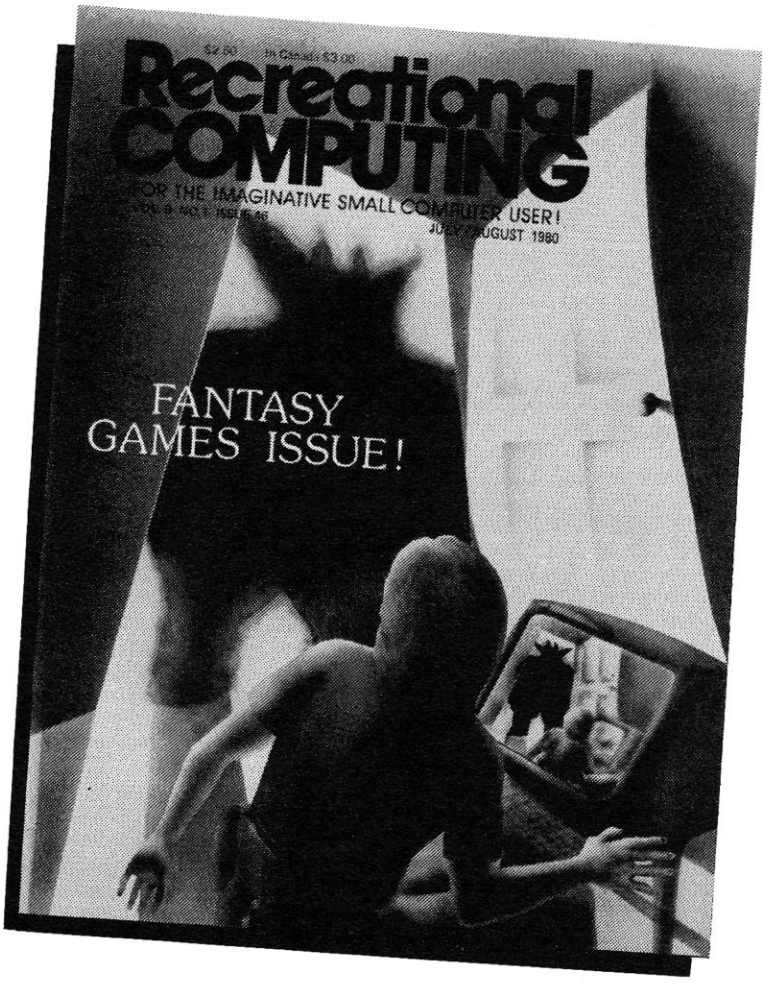

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LAND OF THE RISING SUN
ARDUIN ADVENTURE

REVIEWS

LAND OF THE RISING SUN

Lee Gold
Fantasy Games Unlimited
$18

Three people have asked me about Lee Gold's ***Land of the Rising Sun***. They were the wargamer (that person who, no matter what the mythos, always plays the same character-usually some version of the Connecticut Yankee), the dungeoner (who needs a golf cart for his characters' swords when he's a player; and a new monster, spell, or trap every minute when he's a GM), and the romantic medievalist (that strange person who once sacrificed his eighth-level Paladin so that the rest of the party could get away, giving as his justification only that "that's what a Paladin would do").

This is what I told all of them:

You get: one 150-page rulebook; a master character sheet, for copying; a master calendar sheet, for recording a character's disposition of his time; and three combat sheets, with (grateful thanks to the author) some brief reminders as to their use and modifiers. All of these separate sheets are printed on both sides, except for the calendar, and all reprint tables which are presented in the text of the rules.

I will use the first part of this review to tell you why you shouldn't have anything to do with these rules if you're a wargamer or a dungeoner and like it that way. If you like the idea of a role-playing game based on feudal Japan, with no apologies or attempts to allow for interfacing Japan and your favorite mythos, then I would suggest you skip directly to the section adressed to the medievalist.

This is what I told the wargamer:

This game won't be your cup of sake. For a wargamer to enjoy a game, there has to be a reason for everything. Role-play, to the wargamer, is a function of the game system, not an additive which is provided by the player. And that is why you won't be able to enjoy ***LOTRS***. There is no reason why you should act like a Japanese, aside from the reasons you have considered and rejected in the past with other games. If you are one of those people who play Lawful characters because they have bonuses available to them that Evil characters do not, instead of playing them because you want your character to do good, then a ***LOTRS*** campaign with you in it will drive a GM nervous. Consider ***seppuku***. The rules cover reasons for committing seppuku; disgrace, honor, protest, and so forth — all very well, but suppose one should commit seppuku and doesn't? What then? There are few mechanisms in the game for encouraging proper role-playing and wargamers know: where there is no enforcement there is no rule. The same holds for all social-behavior rules — there is no method given for enforcing them. Thus, the wargamer (or even a role-player, in a desperate attempt to hold on to a favorite character) will ignore those rules when necessary, and will be playing, essentially, a Japanese with an Occidental soul.

Lee Gold, it is obvious, is not a wargamer. This problem would have been clearly obvious to her otherwise, and she could have performed some sneaky sleight-of-hand such as is done in ***Bushido***, where characters who are played properly bring their players a tangible, game-related benefit when the next character is rolled up. This is essentially necessary when dealing with a culture as alien as medieval Japan. All that most players (or GM's, probably) will know about Japan could be found in ***Shogun***, dad's memories about WW2, and "Samurai Night Fever." They will not have the cultural background of behavior that players take (whether they realize it or not) into a european-based fantasy role playing (FRP) game. Therefore, they will not even realize how badly they are role-playing — and the GM will be under incredible pressure to lead his players in the proper directions.

This is what I told the dungeoner:

I know, you've got a whole new section of your Pit opening up next week, and you've already thrown everything in the ***AD&D Monster Manual, All the World's Monsters,*** the ***Arduin Grimoire,*** and every back issue of ***White Dwarf, The Dragon,*** and ***Alarums & Excursions*** at your players, and they are getting bored. Again. So you figure you'll breeze through ***LRS*** and spring a few really weird monsters on the adventurers. Orcs with kusarigama! Goblins with shuriken — you've wanted to use them ever since seeing ***Kung Fu*** on TV! Samurai! Ninja! And the new monsters — a whole bunch of new demons; a new kind of dragon; a brand new class of undead — the gaki; eight or nine "goblin" types, all with neat new abilities; and new types of shape-changers. Boy, these will sure puzzle the players for a while. Wait 'till they try to use their Cleric on a gaki!

And the new spells! There are Origami mages, I Ching Masters, and Weaver mages. The players will really remember this section of the dungeon — it'll probably take them weeks to figure it out.

I don't suppose there's anything which can be done about this type of GM/player. Fortunately, thanks to Lee's care and attention, the little chunks that the dungeon-runners will lift from ***LRS*** are so detailed, so interwoven with the rest of the society under consideration, that the dungeon-runner may feel little twinges of conscience, and may realize that none of these elegant creatures should be living in the vacuum he has designed for them. Maybe. Probably not, of course, but anything is possible. It's just distressing to realize that "ninja" will be showing up all over, claiming to be authentic because they have the abilities listed in ***LRS***, and will be trudging through the dungeon with everybody else ("there we were, a L7 Druid, a L8 Priest of Set, a L7 Hobbit Assassin, and a L8 Ninja, walking down the corridor towards the hydra's lair, when. . .").

Fortunately, I can say with a clear conscience that ***LRS*** is not for the dungeon-runner. The game system is much too closely related to ***C&S*** to be adapted to another game system (though I expect that most of the "adaptation" which will be performed will be only among the "sexy" monsters and character types, all of which will grow gross beyond belief in the translation. . .), and the individual monsters, weapons, and character types will not make any sense outside of their milieu (again, not that that will stop a dedicated dungeon-stocker).

And this is what I told the romantic medievalist: A decent treatment of all those romantic, alien legends from medieval Japan! The medievalists will justifiably love ***LRS***, even if they don't have a Japanese FRP campaign to enjoy. After years of reading, in the hobby press (both apa-zines, which can be excused, and prozines, which should know better), treatments of various segments of Japan, held up and analysed in a vacuum, it is a glorious relief to see the strange weapons, the mysterious social classes, and the flabbergasting monsters collected and presented into an integral whole. If your wish is to run a campaign based on medieval Japan, then you will be in the care of someone who lavished as much attention on this set of rules as the ***Chivalry & Sorcery*** authors lavished on their treatment of medieval Europe.

LRS began as a "supplement" to ***C&S***, and its parentage is evident. The two games are very closely related, in nearly all particulars. Where the two games differ, it is because of the staggering differences between the two cultures being simulated. And this is a simulation, make no doubt about it. ***LRS*** deals completely and specifically with the inhabitants and legends of Japan. I doubt that ***LRS*** would be easy to use, or useful, as a "source-

book" for non-Japanese campaigns — thankfully. There will not be as much carping, I don't think, about the cultural bias of *LRS* as as there was about *C&S* when that game was released. Had this country been founded by superstitious immigrants from Honshu, the deal would be reversed, with *C&S* the exotic study of an alien culture, and *LRS* the disliked reminder of the roots of the popular fantasies.

Be that as it may, there is a lot to like about *LRS*, and I will attempt to describe a few of the salient features. But before I do, a caveat: my knowledge of Japan and things Japanese is every bit as limited as your own. Japan has always been terra incognita — not surprising when one considers that the "Suggested Reading" list in *LRS* has twenty-five entries, sixteen from the same publisher (who evidently does not get his books distributed into my benighted part of the country), and three others which are published by Japanese publishers only. (Consider, by comparison, how many books you could find in any given bookstore on European myth, legend, and history. Just from where I sit in my study I can see dozens of texts on that subject.) So my knowledge of Japan comes from predigested sources, not research: A couple of (badly-taught) college courses, the occasional novel, and the indellible memory of the time that my dad told me of his houseboy, during the Occupation, faithfully turning over his weapons as required by McArthur's military government, and telling then-private Ives that yes, of course he would have used these bamboo spears against the Americans if the Emperor had ordered it. . .

So it's very likely that *LRS* will be the primary source text for GM's who want to run a Japanese FRP game. What, then, will they be getting for their money?

Well, the sense of wonder sets in on page one, and never really departs. Characters can be humans, of course: but they can also be monsters such as *orochi* (a type of intelligent, possibly magic-using snake); *kojin* (shark men); assorted very odd "goblins" (the term "goblin" is more encompassing in this mythos than in the European); or they can be "shape-changers" — either foxes, badgers, cats, or trees !

Body Points, Fatigue Points, Alignment, and other stats are almost identical to *C&S* (except that the stats are rolled on 2D10, giving a bell curve, rather than the flat 1D20 curve used by *C&S*), but with continual "touches" which keep bringing the reader back to the milieu (characters may "cloak" their Charisma, reducing it to ½ the real score if desired, for instance).

Also like *C&S*, characters can be members of any of the social classes: In Japan, these classes are Eta (untouchables), Entertainers, Bandits, Gamblers, Ninja (all lumped together as "outcasts": the Entertainer sub-class contains such fascinating categories as "Sumo Wrestler," "Actor," and "Geisha"), Merchants, Artisans, Peasants, Clerics, Samurai, and Nobles. Fortunately, a character's family's profession is not necessarily his profession. A player can, within limits, choose his profession. Unfortunately, the limitations on this choice are unclear. Some guidelines are given, but it is unclear whether a character can choose a profession outside of his class. Offhand, I would assume not. Nevertheless, giving the players a choice does give the player the chance to place his character in the profession he desires — within limits. And all classes have skills which would make for interesting role-play.

The Experience system is exactly the same as in *C&S*, with the exception that characters get EP for learning "Fine Arts" such as the "Tea Ceremony" and "Appreciating Sunsets," and these EP awards are quite high — as befits the intellectual and artistic sensibilities of the Japanese. There is also a short section on EP awards during non-game periods, which is necessary since, as in *C&S*, characters gain EP for simply aging in their profession.

For a culture as rife with honor as this one, we would expect the *C&S* system of Honor Points to be retained, and it is. However, there are differences — taking heads, losing heirlooms, revealing shapechangers for what they are, and having a Fine Art in common with the person being influenced all result in additions to one's Honor Points. These benefits are a nice touch, in that they lead to role-play even among those benighted sorts who insist upon game-related benefits for their actions. Unfortunately (and this is the main objection for the wargamer above), the following few sub-sections, on "Overriding Obligations," "Codes of Justice," and "Typical Reasons for Killing Someone or Committing Suicide," are too brief, with too little attention paid to the effects on characters of the sanctions which enforce these cultural rules. "Public Disgrace," however severe a punishment, will have little effect on all but the best role-players.

The magic section is a strange amalgam of *C&S* and Japan: it is a testament to the adaptability of *C&S* that the melding works so well. As with *C&S*, there are four basic types of mage: Primitive, Minor Mode, Major Mode, and Mystic — each having a number of sub-types. It is in these sub-types that *LRS* expresses the nipponese differences. Some of the more interesting sub-types are: Origami Mages, who create their magical effects by folding sheets of paper into the proper forms; I Ching Masters, similiar to the Western Astrologers; Herbalists, whose closest Western counterpart is a Doctor; Weaver Mages; and others. These mage types are, if anything, more detailed than those presented in *C&S*. The entire process of magic benefits is also more fully explained and somewhat clarified over the original, very difficult system.

In addition, Lee also performed many of the calculations necessary for operating a Mage under the *C&S*-based magic system: she has thoughtfully provided several tables which allow players to refer to a single chart and find out how long, for instance, a Focus takes to construct. Given the availability of these tables, and the (still) difficult nature of the enchantment and spell-learning rules, I expect that the tables will be used much more often than the rules they are intended to illustrate.

Finally, there is an alphabetical index of all magical spells, so that a specific spell can be found with an absolute minimum of bother.

This detail is all well and good, you say, but what about fighting?

Well, there are dozens of skills which apply to combat and martial activities. All are learned by hopeful users in a process derived from the Enchantment rules. These martial arts give the characters all of those neat abilities that we've been waiting for. Deflecting arrows with the hands (*"yadomeju"*), dicing one's enemies with two swords at once (*"nitojutsu"*), and scads of *ninjajutsu* (skills for Ninja). These skills all give those characters who have learned the skills definite combat advantages.

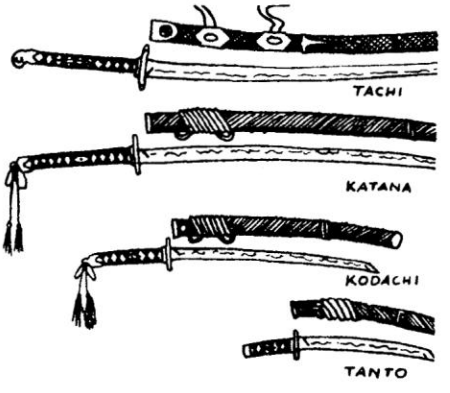
The combat system itself is, if anything, more complex than *C&S*, since these various martial arts must be taken into account as must the unique aspects of the weapons being used (such as "entangling parries" with "chain weapons") and a series of optional rules covering tactics, aiming, and so forth. Thankfully, an extensive example of melee is provided, which helps considerably.

As final bonuses, there are rules covering aerial combat and submarine combat. Useful, since several of the creatures which may be player-characters either fly or live in the water.

The religions of ancient Japan were Shintoism and Buddhism, and each is covered in *LRS*. There are distinct differences in the two religions, and each has its own clerics, ceremonies, abilities, and miracles. In addition, a character's religion will play a part in his disposition after his death (which led to what may be the strangest major rules section I have ever seen, entitled "after the character dies"). Although there is no absolute equivalent to the Western-based Raise Dead miracle, there are "fudges" which allow players with a favorite character dead to get around the lack.

Approximately four pages are devoted to the design and structure of feudal Japan, with emphasis mainly on the various types of buildings which will be encountered, with some attention given to the size and composition of towns. A section on mass combat is also included. This section is almost identical to the *C&S* system. In addition, a "non-wargamer" mass combat system is included which allows large battles to be fought without having to resort to miniatures and a tabletop, yet which allows the players' characters to participate, albeit somewhat abstractedly.

The monsters and encounters sections of *LRS* are what one would, by this time in one's reading of the rules, expect. Like *C&S*, there are several tables describing the types of humans whom travellers might meet, with average stats and abilities pre-figured — a must



for characters as complicated as the characters in this game system are. Fortunately, Lee did not simply recopy the *C&S* tables, changing the figures and headings to match her game. There are also tables given for determining the very important specialized weapon and martial art skills which figure so vitally in combat, and for determining which Fine Arts are known, which will be important if the characters don't fight.

For the monsters given, each has enough space devoted to it that a GM should not have too much trouble role-playing them. More detail would not have hurt, but I don't think it is absolutely necessary. Again, the complete novelty of all of these creatures is rather bewildering. The dragons live in the water, and rule over it – and have no breath weapon. The gaki have very little in common with Western Undead, which they superficially resemble (they are known as the Hungry Dead). Goblins have no resemblance whatsoever to Orcs or Goblins of Western mythology – there are eight types, all with completely different capabilities and motivations. Shapechangers are not the sinister creatures of werewolf literature, but are rather "shrewd animals and trees who have found out how to transform themselves into humans." And the spirits! There are spirits for victims of Drowning, Treachery, Lovesickness, and Death in Childbirth. There is a spirit which might be created by a living person's obsessive hatred of someone else. There are spirits of the Thunder, Earthquakes, and Snow. And there are eight hundred million Kami of various sorts (fortunately a rather withdrawn lot, or there would be no peace).

There is a lot of information in this book. Luckily, the author included an index and used a section-numbering system which will,I hope, become the standard rather than the exception in future FRP rules. She also had a stroke of genius, and included two sets of sample character sheets: one is filled out, and the other has the blanks filled in with the section number which applies to that part of the character sheet.

In summary, I strongly recommend *Land of the Rising Sun* to the role-players in the readership. It is a complete, entertaining game. Even if you don't start a campaign based on

readership. It is a complete, entertaining game. Even if you dont start a campaign based on the culture given, this is a good book to read to find out "How It's Done When It's Done Right." *LRS* has all of the detail of *Chivalry & Sorcery*, with the added advantage of being a product of the second generation of those rules, so that the rough spots have been somewhat sanded down and refinished. And those of you who want to run a campaign in Old Japan will be in the best of care.

Wes Ives

ARDUIN ADVENTURE

David A. Hargrave
Grimoire Games
$9.95

You get a box containing a 64-Page 8½"x11" rulebook, two D20s, 16 artifact cards, and three Arduin character sheets. The dice are made from high-impact plastic, and are the only type required to play this game. The artifact cards contain black-and-white drawings on one side and a description section on the reverse to be filled in by the gamemaster (GM), to be handed to the players who acquire magical items during play.

The Arduin Adventure (AA) is designed to introduce newcomers to the hobby of adventure gaming, otherwise known as fantasy role-playing gaming. It was written by one of the best-known authors in the hobby, whose *Arduin Trilogy* of rulebooks has fans around the world.

The rules contain an explanation of what the hobby is all about, a section on character creation, a simple combat system plus an expansion, a simple magic system, some representative treasure items and monsters, a complete scenario, and a bibliography of recommended reading. The rules exemplify the Hargrave philosophy of giving basic guidelines and letting the gamer develop personal additions and modifications to suit personal need.

The best part of the book is its introduction to adventure gaming as a hobby. This quite properly puts emphasis on the function of the GM and what is required to construct a good scenario for the players, including tips on the relationship between the GM and the players. It begins with a description of role-playing in terms of assuming the roles in a movie script, and the script simile is used throughout in explaining what it is like to play a character in a role-playing game. This kind of introduction is essential to any introductory game, and is well done here.

Character creation provides short physical and psychological descriptions of the six player-character races in *AA*: Elf, Dwarf, Hobbit, Human, Amazon, and Half-Orc. The character classes, or professions, add more detail to the role-playing background: Warrior, Mage, Priest, Thief, and Forester. But these are less well described than the races, and in particular I would have preferred to have a guide for the beginner on what equipment would be appropriate for each. Would a mage wear armor, for example? What equipment you tend to use or avoid affects role-playing, and a bit more in the way of guidance would have been helpful. Alignment is explained in terms of how a character will react in most situations, with explanations for the various combinations of the chaotic /neutral /lawful / amoral axis and the good /neutral /evil axis.

Character statistics are generated by rolling 1D20 for each of Dexterity, Agility, Strength, Constitution, Intelligence, Ego, Wisdom, and Charisma. Additions and subtractions for certain personal characteristics are made according to the character's race.

Hit points are semi-fixed in this game. Hit points equal the character's Constitution, plus 20 points. For every experience level gained above the first, the character gains one new hit point. This is consistent with the system used in volume III of the *Arduin Trilogy*, and is designed to keep high-level characters from totally outclassing low-level characters in a fight. Thus, a first-level warrior in *AA* would not refuse to travel with a party of eighth-level characters for lack of adequate endurance in combat, a weakpoint in games that key hit points solely to level. The system is attractive.

Gaining levels is controlled by a number-of-adventures system instead of using experience points. On e might prefer a more gradated scale than the five adventures per level up to fourth, then 20 adventures per level thereafter. Each experience level above the first in *AA* improves by +1 the number rolled on the D20 to hit in combat or to save against a hazard with no distinction by class or race. The only complaint I have with this section is that it takes about 100 words to say what could be said in 25.

The combat system bears some superficial resemblance to the original "alternative *D&D*/ combat system". Armor is numbered in Armor Classes from AC9 for clothing or hide to AC2 for plate armor and shield, and that armor is passive resistance rather than a defensive skill. Every weapon is rated for penetration against each armor class in the Combat Chart, providing you with the basic to-hit number. This number is adjusted up or down according to the Strength and experience level of the attacker, the Dexterity of the defender, and certain specific tactical situations.

The similarity between the terms used here and in *D&D* has the advantage that *AA* players can use *D&D* magazines and other sources.

I found the terminology used to explain the combat system confusing. This is defined as consisting of a combination of Attack Factor and Defence Factor, but the AF is defined as consisting of the numerical rating of the weapon in the Weapons Factor Chart (which actually appears in *AA* under the title of the Combat Chart), while the DF is defined as armor class, with both getting various adjustments. Since the DF is really AC, it makes better sense to so define it, and remove the DF language altogether.

Movement in *AA* is governed by adding the character's Agility and Dexterity and multiplying their sum by five for the number of feet the character can move in one melee round. Thus, with an AGI 15 and a DEX 11, a character could move 15+11=26x5=130'. However, for purposes of movement computation, both AGI and DEX are considered to be reduced by certain factors, depending upon the type of armor and /or shield used.

The extension of the combat system is also keyed to AGI and DEX, but in a different way. You average these two characteristics to get your Coordination Factor, and check the CF against a chart to find out how many actions the character can do each melee round. This system combines combat and movement in one system, as you divide your total move-

ment by the number of actions, and can travel or fight each segment but not both. For example, our sample character with a total possible movement of 130' and a CF of 11 would have two actions per round, or two segments of 65' of movement, or one move and one attack, etc.

The CF system is very flexible, and I expect that most *AA* players will use it soon after mastering the basic combat /movement system. You have the melee round divided into at most 30 segments, or "counts". The Gm counts down from the highest available CF to 1 each round, and you cannot act until your count (or counts) is announced. The counts for each action are determined by dividing a character's CF by the number of actions allowed that character. For example, with a CF of 15, the character would have three actions a round, and would act first on count 15, second on count 10, and third on count 5. This realistically has the high-coordination character (or monster) act first.

SCALE ARMOR: Bone, horn or metal scales, overlapping on a

One interesting thing about the combat system is the damage done by weapons. Instead of the traditional rolling of different sizes of dice for the amount of damage done by different kinds of weapons, each weapon is rated as doing a flat number of points per hit. A two handed sword does 10 points, the average beginning character has about 30 hit points, and thus can survive three hits before dying from so heavy a weapon, and 4-5 hits from lighter weapons.

There is also a critical hit and fumble system, with some savage tables for results. An attack roll on the D20 of 20 does a critical hit if the attacker needed 19 or less to hit, while a 1 does a fumble if the attacker needed a 2 or more to hit.

The magic system provides different systems of spellcasting for mage and priest. The mage memorizes spells and can cast them instantly (somewhat of a "Vancean" system), while the priest has all spells available for use at need (not memorizing specific spells for use), but needs ten melee rounds of prayer and ritual to cast a spell. *AA* provides lists of spells for the first four Orders of Power for mage and priest, who can use spells of up to half the character's experience level in Order of Power. So the game will handle spellusers of up to ninth level before they will need another source of spells, such as the *Arduin Trilogy*. The only problem with the system is the lack of any specific method of acquiring new spells. New characters start with three spells at first level, but there is no explanation for how many spells they can handle at second, third, etc., level, nor how they go about learning or buying them.

The section on magic also includes the rules on saving throws, not only for magic resistance but also saves against dragon breath, fear, paralysis, poison/venom, acid/liquids, lightning/energy, mesmerism, and stoning. The table gives base figures for each of these categories plus spoken spells and device magic for every race or type of creature in the game. This figure is adjusted by character class and experience level. Unfortunately the description of how this works is expressed in a twisted way: "A plus means one less needed to save, a minus means one more".

My favorite part of the magic section in *AA* is the part on limited-use magic items. In addition to scrolls, which are useless after only a few uses, and potions, which have only a few doses per bottle, in *AA* wands have only three uses of a single spell, which can be made by any mage who knows that spell. Rods have up to five uses each of up to three different spells, and staffs have up to ten uses of up to five different spells. The idea of letting lower-level mages create limited spell-storing devices is attractive. I recommend *AA* as a source of ideas for adapting to existing games even for people who don't need it as an introductory game.

The monster chapter contains 30 critters, and there are an additional half-dozen near the back of the book. These run from orcs to eight kinds of dragon. One of the most interesting is the wraith, the only major type of undead in the book. The threat this poses to the characters is that every hit does 3 hit points and 6 points of CON damage. Survivors of such attacks can regain 1 point of CON per week of complete rest, but the CON (and each represents 1 hit point, remember) is lost permanently if the character does not begin resting immediately. Thus, the monster is fearful without the loss-of-level system used in *D&D,* which was illogical — an energy loss bringing knowledge loss.

The last major section of *AA* is "The Adventure." This reiterates the function of the GM as a story teller, and then gives step-by-step tips on how to set up your own scenarios for your own gaming. This is followed by a prepared scenario pack giving the tower of a wizard slain years ago, and now inhabited by a variety of creatures on its seven levels. The six floors of the tower are mapped and described in detail, using some of the monsters given earlier in the book. There is also a list of 13 deadly traps to be placed in locations of the GM's choice. The seventh level is the caverns below the tower, which are completely mapped and have more area than the six stories of the tower put together, but which are largely left to the GM to populate with monsters, traps, and treasures.

AA concludes with an illustrated glossary of the terms covering types of weapons, armor, and shields, an index of terms and abbreviations, a sample Arduin Character Sheet filled out with a beginning character and an explanation of some of the major entries on the sheet, additional monsters and magic items, a set of optional combat rules, and a bibliography.

The Arduin Adventure is intended to introduce beginners to the basic ideas of role-playing gaming, using simplified rules from which the players can move on to more elaborate systems, including the author's own *Arduin Trilogy*. It is an admirable idea, and in fact the discussion sections of *AA* make it a good book to give the people who have tried adventure gaming but aren't really sure whether they quite understand what people enjoy

about the hobby. *AA* does not completely live up to its high intentions because the rules leave certain areas either ambiguous or insufficiently laid out in simple how-to-do-it steps, which is what the beginner needs. However it supplies good ideas on how to role-play and how to GM, and that plus the elaborate scenario of the wizard's tower make this a good buy for those who have already been exposed to adventure gaming, and are looking for more gaming aids to help them get started at it themselves.

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THE SWORD of Hollywood

By LARRY Di TILLIO

CRITICAL HIT FOR THE ARCHER: Back in April, if you were lucky, you caught a two-hour, made-for-TV goodie called *The Archer: Fugitive From the Empire*.

The Archer told the story of Toran of Malveel, a Prince of the Hawk Clan who is forced to flee from the minions of the sinister, world-conquering Bar-Draikian Dynasty after being framed for the murder of his father.

The Archer took place in a fantasy world reminiscent of both Robert E. Howard's Hyboria and Fritz Lieber's Lankhmar. Its story was centered around Toran's quest for the magician Lazar-Sa, who was tutor to both Toran's father and grandfather. Toran did not find Lazar-Sa, which indicated to TV-wise viewers that *The Archer* was a pilot.

From a sword & sorcery loving viewpoint *The Archer* showed great promise. Its world was a colorful, intriguing and well thought out fantasy backdrop. Its characters were terriffic; particularly Toran's enemy/lover Estra (daughter of the Oracle, whose mother was supposedly murdered by Toran's father at the urging of Lazar-Sa) and his (at first unwelcome) sidekick, Slant the Drushian, a gambler and thief to warm the cockles of any role-player's heart. "There's lots of money waiting out there Toran! Buckets and baskets and barrels of it... Ah treasure, I love it!"

The villains were also fantastic, including a bevy of wondrously nasty snakemen led by a renegade human known as Gar the Destroyer (who was the spitting image of Frazetta's *Death Dealer*, right down to that magnificently curved war-axe).

There was also magic aplenty (time-stops, a fetish necklace that summoned beasts for various purposes, mystic frogs and best of all 'Elbe' the Heartbow, a sentient weapon that fires arrows which explode and must be linked, at great peril, to its wielder) and monsters most foul, all weaved into the story with intelligence and reverence for the genre.

Sound good? Well, it was, but like many other promising series, *The Archer* was cancelled. NBC who comissioned the pilot from its writer-director-producer Nick Corea decided not to go ahead with the series. Nick, a longtime fantasy buff for whom *The Archer* was a labor of love, told me that the network simply did not know what to do with a series so different from the usual television pablum.

The worst thing about the demise of *The Archer* as a series is that with the success of *Excalibur* and all the upcoming sword & sorcery in film, some kind of fantasy series will appear sooner or later. In the case of *The Archer* we would have had a series helmed by a fantasy buff, and written by writers familiar with the area (Nick was adamant on seeking out such scribblers to insure that the show *would* please fantasy fans).

If you saw *The Archer* and liked it, sit down, write a letter and state in no uncertain terms that you want to see it become a weekly series. If you didn't see it, write and ask for a replay of the pilot. Address your letters to Head of Programming, NBC, 3000 West Alameda Avenue, Burbank, CA 91505.

For your information, the exact date of airing was April 12th, 1981 at 8 p.m. Include that in the letter so they'll know what you're referring to.

AND NOW DRAGONSLAYER: This summer shapes up to be a great summer for fantasy fans. Not only is Harryhausen's *Clash of the Titans* (see special feature next issue) opening July 12th, but we will also be treated to the release of the Paramount/Disney co-production of *Dragonslayer*.

Dragonslayer tells the tale of Galen, young apprentice to the last real sorcerer on Earth, Ulrich (played by veteran Ralph Richardson). Ulrich is dying and this leaves Galen to face the ultimate test, the destruction of the dragon Vermithrax Perjorative!

Like all nasty dragons, Vermithrax needs a steady diet of nubile virgins to keep him from thrashing the countryside; the sorcery of young Galen seems the only hope in thwarting the monstrous wyrm. Galen is not quite up to the task at the film's beginning, despite his attempt to use an enchanted amulet to bury the dragon alive.

Nevertheless, as *Dragonslayer* progresses Galen acquires the love of a maiden and more confidence in himself, bringing him to the final confrontation against Vermithrax, a confrontation with more than a few surprises for everyone.

Dragonslayer's world is Britain during the Dark Ages, before Christianity fully arrived (though there is a Christian cleric in the film). It is a milieu without knights in shining armor, holy grails, and courtly loves as we saw in *Excalibur* but a world of strange customs and weird values steeped in superstition where magic is a natural part of existence.

The writers of the film, Hal Barwood and Matthew Robbins (*MacArthur*, *The Sugarland Express*), Purposely designed this setting for their story, wanting the primeval feel of a largely undocumented period in history to heighten the fantasy aspect.

Much imagination went into the re-creation of this world and fans will revel in it when they see it. The dragon was created by David Bunnet and Phil Tippet of George Lucas' industrial Light and Magic Inc., and special effects were handled by Brian Johnson who brought with

Universal City Studios

him the special effects team from *Alien*.

See *Dragonslayer* as soon as you can. It'll be an experience worth having.

SHORT TAKES: Hanna-Barbera is developing a feature-length, animated film based on *Dragon's Egg* by Robert L. Forward. *Dragon's Egg* depicts life on a neutron star and is well worth seeing.

In 1951, Robert Wise (*Star Trek - The Motion Picture*) directed what is now considered a classic in SF films *The Day the Earth Stood Still*.

For those of you who have never seen it (and you should!), it concerns Klattu (played by Michael Rennie), a representative of a superior inter-galactic confederation who journeys to Washington, D.C., in a flying saucer to warn the people of Earth that if they continued their war-like ways they will be reduced to a burnt-out cinder in the skies.

It was announced that a sequel to *The Day the Earth Stood Still* is in the works. Ray Bradbury will develop the storyline, though it is doubtful he will actually pen the script. The premise for the story is simple: The son of Klattu returns to Earth to carry out his father's mission.

It will be sometime before production actually begins (if it ever does) so don't hold your breath.

Wes Craven, who hit big with low-budge horror films (*The Last House on the Left*, *The Hills Have Eyes*), is currently directing *The Swamp Thing* in South Carolina. Yes fans, that is the DC-Comics *Swamp Thing*. Production began last April 27th, so it won't be coming your way much before Christmas.

Paramount Pictures and Walt Disney Productions

Larry DiTillio has moved to Arizona to work for Flying Buffalo so unfortunately this is the last installment of this column.

We are trying to convince him to write a *Sword of the Desert* column but nothing is certain.

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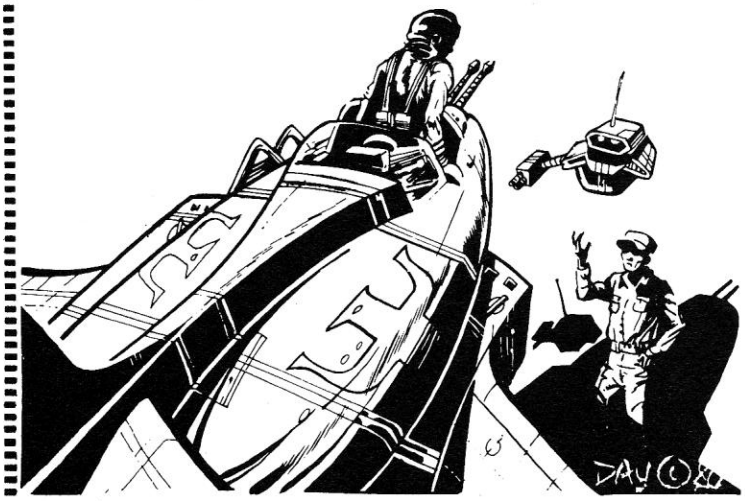

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Space Opera consists of two 90+ page books, handy reference sheets, character, ship, and planetary record forms in a box. It is available from better game and hobby shops or direct from:
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Coming This Month: MARTIGAN BELT
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QUICK PLUGS

I.S.C.V.: KING RICHARD – Approved for use with *Traveller*, this is a set of 21 sheets of 17"x11" deck plans of a luxury liner of the first class. Set up for 15mm miniatures from Martian Metals, it also comes with eight pages of rules designed by Jordan Weisman. The rules cover descriptions of the various decks and special rooms as well as ship statistics. Available from FASA, 811 W Junior Terr, Chicago, IL 60613 for $10.

AFTERMATH! – Designed by Paul Hume and Robert Charrette, it comes boxed with three books (one 60 pages, two 84 pages), an introductory scenario, charts, tables, and play aids. Book 1 contains basic rules, Book 2 has players notes, and Book 3 has the GM's guide. The game is for 2 to 6 players and a referee. This is role-playing in a post-holocaust world. Available from Fantasy Games Unlimited, PO Box 182, Roslyn, NY 11576.

THE BOOK OF EBON BINDINGS – This is a reissue of the original edition by M.A.R. Barker. It contains minor corrections and now comes with a black cover. Price is $5.95. **THE NORTHWEST FRONTIER** – These are 17"x 11" large scale maps for campaigns in M.A.R. Barker's world of Tekumel. Price is $3.95. Both are available from Adventure Games, Inc., 871 Edgerton St, St Paul, MN 55101.

CARDBOARD HEROES – Three more sets of full color miniatures for fantasy gaming. Set 2 comes with 40 brigands, orcs, and goblins. Set 3 comes with 40 half-orcs, reptile men, and kobolds. Set 4 are 48 animals, some typical, some giant-sized. They sell for $3.50 each. Available from Steve Jackson Games, PO Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Texas residents add 5% sales tax.

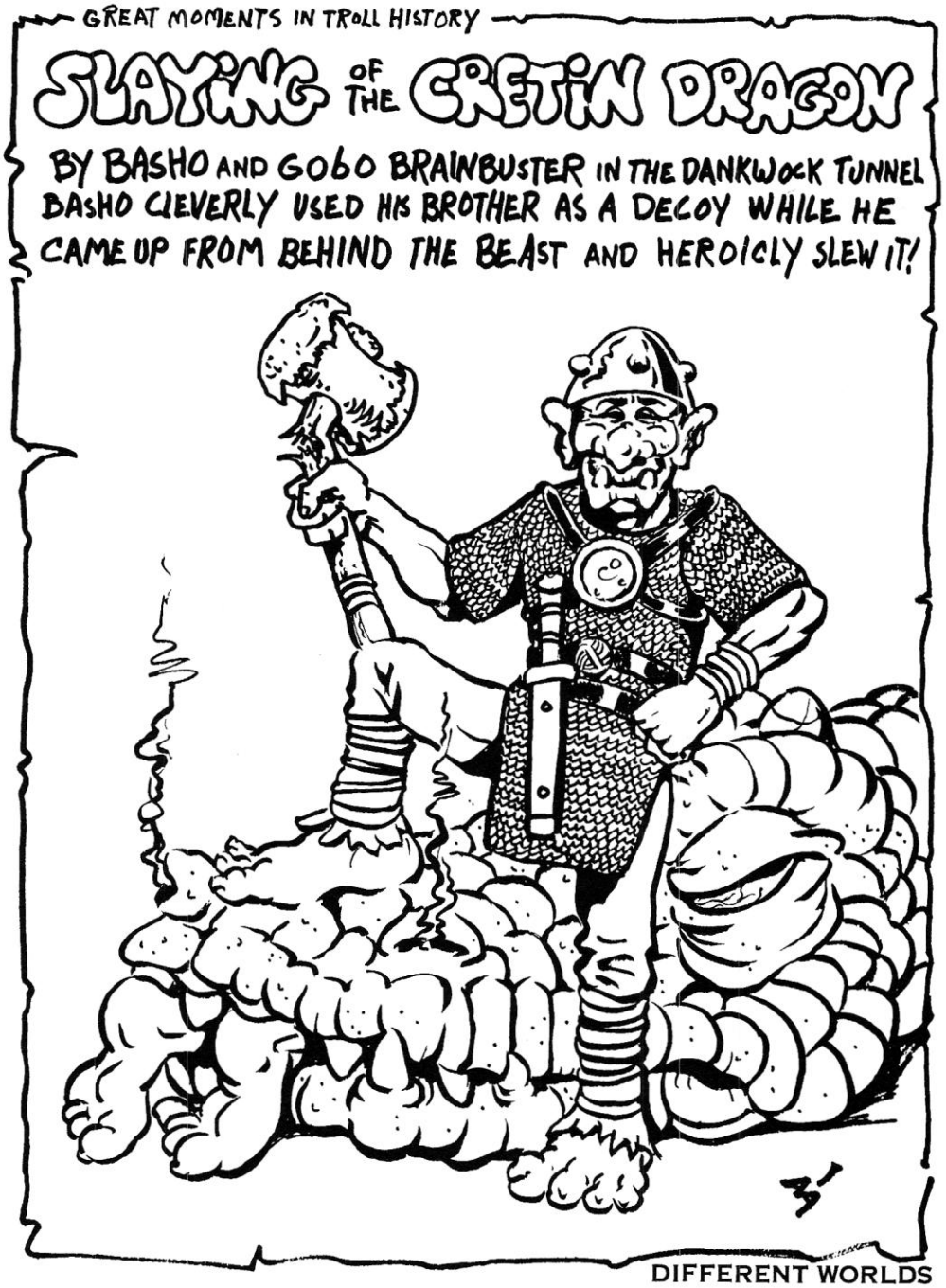
SURVIVAL/THE BARBARIAN – This is a double game. Comes with 108 counters and 16 pages of rules. The first is an SF board game with a 10½"x17" map, for one to six players. The object is to trek across a wilderness area to reach a rescue site. The second game also comes with a 10½"x17" map. It is a quest game for one to two players. Designed by Bob McWilliams and Ian Livingstone. Price is $4.95. **DUNGEON TILES** – These are eight sheets of dungeon floor plans printed on coated cardstock. Also comes with 108 counters representing doors, treasure chests, urns, etc. There are also printed beds, tables, ladders, etc. The four pages of rules written by Steven V. Cole include sighting, stacking, examples, and notes. Price is $9.95. Published by Task Force, both are available through dealers.

THE FREE CITY OF HAVEN – Comes with 128 page loose leaf book, 10 maps on cardstock, and a 34"x22" map. Designed by Richard Meyer, Kerry Lloyd, Janet Trautvetter, Michael Welker, Larry Richardson, and Michael Watkins, this is an extensive description of a city with details on over 100 shops, 60 encounters, and 300 NPC's. Price is $14.95 from Gamelords, 18616 Grosbeak Terr, Gaithersburg, MD 20760. Include $1 for shipping and handling, Maryland residents add 5% sales tax.

HANDBOOK OF TRAPS & TRICKS – Edited by Ben Ezzell, this 24 page digest-sized book contains hundreds of trap descriptions. Each trap is keyed as to how long it will take the player characters to deal with it, the number of characters affected, place of likely location, type (pitfall, cage, etc.), chance to miss, chance to escape, etc. It also comes with notes and philosophies in using these traps. Price is $9.50. **MONSTER FILE NUMBER ONE** – These are 48 monster descriptions printed on 3½"x5½" cards, individually illustrated on the back of each card. There are man trees, sylphs, lava monsters, and such. Price is $5. Both are available through The Dragon Tree, 118 Sayles Blvd, Abilene, TX 79605, add 50 cents for postage. Texas residents add 5% sales tax.

TRILLION CREDIT SQUADRON – This is Adventure 5 for *Traveller*. Designed by Marc W. Miller and John Harshman, this 48 page book contains rules for building a squdron of ships with limited budgets. There are campaign rules as well as new subsector descriptions. Price is $4.98 from Game Designers' Workshop, Inc., PO Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61701.

DARGON'S DUNGEON – This is a *T&T* solo scenario. Originally designed by Bill Hart, edited and rewritten by Mike Stackpole, Paul O'Connor, Liz Danforth, and Pat Mueller, this 44 page book contains a dungeon adventure set up by a 17th level wizard for adventurers and thrill-seekers. There is a special section on magic items and wandering monsters. Available from Flying Buffalo Inc., PO Box 1467, Scottsdale, AZ 85252.



INTERSTELLAR TRADE LEDGER – These are forms for keeping track of trades conducted by players in SF games. It logs income from cargo and passengers plus operating expenses. Three-hole punched, each 8½"x11" sheet contains four logs. A pad of 50 sheets is available for $2.50.**PLAYER CHARACTER CHRONICLE** – A form of recording adventures of characters. There are entry sections for date, location, description of encounter, wounds received, treasure acquired, and experience gained. There are 11 such entries per 8½"x11" sheet. Three-hole punched, it comes in a pad of 50 sheets for $2.50. Available from Reilly Associates, PO Box 8144, Rochester, NY 14617. Add 25 cents per order for postage and handling.

GRIFFIN MOUNTAIN – This 208 page book comes with a pull out 20"x30" map. Designed by Rudy Kraft, Paul Jaquays, and Greg Stafford, this is a extensive wilderness adventure description for *RQ*. Covering an area just north of Dragon Pass, there are descriptions of the natives, religions, rumors, scenarios, citadels, special places of interest, sources of information, maps, indexes, and much, much more. Available for $15.95 from Chaosium Inc, PO Box 6302, CA 94706. Add $1 for postage and handling. California residents add appropriate 6% or 6½% sales tax.

THE BLACK TOWER – This 44 page book designed by David Guinasso and Stephen Abrams contains a complete dungeon-type adventure for use with most role-playing systems. The tower contains six levels with 11 to 37 areas to explore each. It also comes with maps, notes for referees, notes on monsters, and a historical glossary. Available from Midkemia Press, 3410 Waco St (1), San Diego, CA 92117.

HEXPRESSIONS – This is a rubber stamp that prints hexes. It stamps seven 18mm hexes at a time. It is available for $9.95 postpaid from Days of Yore, Box 814, Doylestown, PA 18901.

SECRET OF THE SLAVERS STOCKADE – For character levels 4-7, this is Dungeon Module A2 for *AD&D* Designed by Harold Johnson with Tom Moldavay, the 40 page book contains a description of a hill fort with 39 places to explore and a dungeon with 39 areas. There are also four new monster descriptions and tournament notes. **ASSAULT ON THE AERIE OF THE SLAVE LORDS** – Also for character levels 4-7, this is Dungeon Module A3 for *AD&D* Designed by Allen Hammack, this 32 page book contains descriptions of caves with nine areas to explore, a city with 68 various shops and residences, and a catacomb with nine encounter possibilities. It also comes with extensive tournament notes. Both are available through most dealers, published by TSR Hobbies, Inc., PO Box 756, Geneva, WI 53147.

WARGAMERS INFORMATION 37 – This irregular newsletter features news on latest goings on in the wargaming hobby. This issue is eight pages long and has a single copy price of 35 cents. Subscription is $3 for 12 issues. Along with the news, press releases, etc., there is a list of conventions. Available from Flying Buffalo Inc, PO Box 1467, Scottsdale, AZ 85252. Edited by Rick Loomis.

GRYPHON, *grif'in*, n. [Fr. *griffon*, It. *grifone*, < L. *gryps*, *gryphus*, griffin, Gr. *gryps*, a griffon, < *grypos*, hook-beaked.] *Classical mythology*. 1) A large, winged creature combining the keen eye and sharp wit of an eagle with the independence and courage of a lion. 2) A Science Fiction Fantasy Gaming magazine with the same qualities.

Recent articles include: Creating a Religion for realistic Fantasy Role-Playing Games; *Task Force Four* – a review of four Science-Fiction Boardgames from Task Force Games; Yaquinto's Science Fiction Boardgame **Starfall**; *"Ships of the Imperium"* 25mm spaceship plans for *Traveller*; Creative and Realistic Mapping for 'FRP' Gaming; An interview with the Wizard of TSR, Gary Gygax; A Review of Game Designers' Workshop's **Imperium** and **Double Star** Science-Fiction Boardgames; Miniature Figure Reviews; A Review of Yaquinto's new Fantasy Boardgame, **The Beastlord**; A Review of SPI's Science-Fiction Boardgame **Freedom in the Galaxy**; A Game Review of **Marine 2002**; *Interface* – Computer Game Software; and **much** more...

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Magazine Covering Miniatures — *The Courier*

Magazine Covering Role-Playing — *The Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society*

All Time Best Pre-Napoleonic Gunpowder Rules — *Renaissance* (WRG)

All time Best Air Combat Rules — *Basic/Advanced Fighter Combat* (Gamescience)

Charles Roberts Awards

Pre-20th Century Boardgame — *Empires of the Middle Ages* (SPI)

20th Century Boardgame — *Crescendo of Doom* (AH)

Fantasy/SF Boardgame — *Azhanti High Lightning* (GDW)

Computer Game — *Temple of Apshai* (Automated Simulations)

Initial Release of a Boardgame — *Streets of Stalingrad* (Phoenix)

Magazine Covering Boardgaming — *Fire & Movement*

Amateur Magazine — HMS Review

Hall of Fame

Gary Gygax

Gamers' Choice

Ace of Aces *(Nova)*

GAME DESIGNERS GUILD AWARDS

Ace of Aces (Nova)
Empire of the Middle Ages (SPI)
Streets of Stalingrad (Phoenix)
Azhanti High Lightning (GDW)
Tac Force (GDW)

Congratulations to all concerned!

Among other things, Avalon Hill has bought the rights to publish SPI's *Freedom in the Galaxy* and *Conquistador*. And whatever happened to Jim Dunnigan?

DragonQuest projects: SPI will be publishing a *World Generation Supplement* by Steve Jackson and an adventure titled *Enchanted Wood* by Paul Jaqays.

Fantasy Games Unlimited has bought pieces of the Phoenix line. They have already come out with *Aftermath!* and they will be coming out with new versions of *Bushido* and *Elementary Watson*.

There are mucho rumors that Dave Arneson will buy out Operational Studies Group.

News from Ral Partha — The *Children of the Night* series will contain such figures as Voodoo Men, Insect Men, Demons, Vampires, Zombies, etc. The *Collector Series* will now have some packages with assortments of different figures. *The Adventurers* will contain monsters, elves, knights, goblins, etc., in sets of six or more figures.

GDW has moved to a new warehouse to keep up with their growth. They have a new address: PO Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61701. In the mean time more *Traveller* items keep popping up . . .

Citadel Miniatures now has a factory in the U.S. They can be conacted at: POBox 12352, Cincinnati, OH 45212.

I hear that Chaosium is working on a volcano role-playing game. That must be why they are going to Dragonflight in Seattle the weekend of September 11-13.

Paul Jaquays' apartment recently burned down. For those who are interested in contributing to the *RuneQest* monster book, his new address is: 343 Oakland St (Apt 31), Manchester, CT 06040.

The mystery this month is why did Dave Ritchie quit SPI? They're dropping like flies out there.

Negotiations for movie rights continue. Looks like Heritage has the edge for the *Heavy Metal* movie game and SPI looks good to get the *Conan* contract. However, my Texas spies saw Heritage gearing up to produce the *Conan* game!

Looks like TSR beat out Steve Jackson for the *Vampire* title for their games.

Heritage may be coming out with Dennis (Bunnies & Burrows) Sustare's RPG, *Fantasy Adventures*. Don't know but then nobody talks to me anymore.

Automated Simulations will be releasing *The Dragon's Eye*, an overland adventure game with graphics, and *Crush, Crumble and Chomp*, a game where the player assumes the role of the monster. These computer games should be available at Pacific Origins.

Flying Buffalo will have at Origins *Grimtooth's Traps*, a book of traps for any RPG. They also have plans for doing a computer FRP PBM game. It may be ready by the end of this year. It'll probably be called *Heroic Fantasy*.

And now for all you men out there, whose legs are those on the cover of *Top Secret*?

Lou Zocchi, "the dice king," has done it again. He has come up with Microhedral dice. The 20-sided is available now and is only half an inch high.

Simulations Publications, Incorporated will now like everyone to refer to them as simply SPI. We always have, but *then* it was unofficial.

If you don't already know by now, SPI's *Universe* will be a SF RPG. It will sell for $20.

Some Turkey reports that the reason why *Fistfull of Turkeys* is such a good game is that it took him *almost* 5 minutes to playtest!

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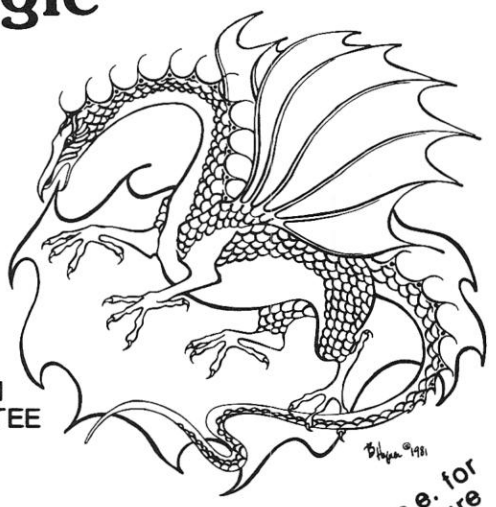

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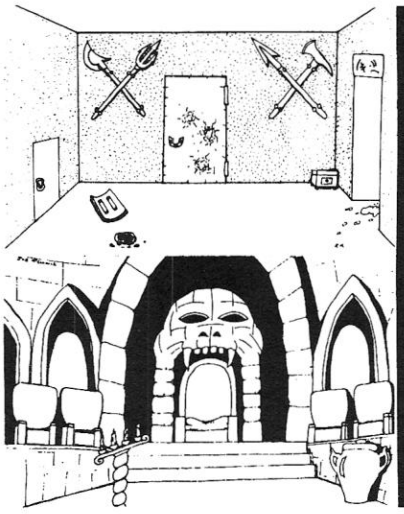

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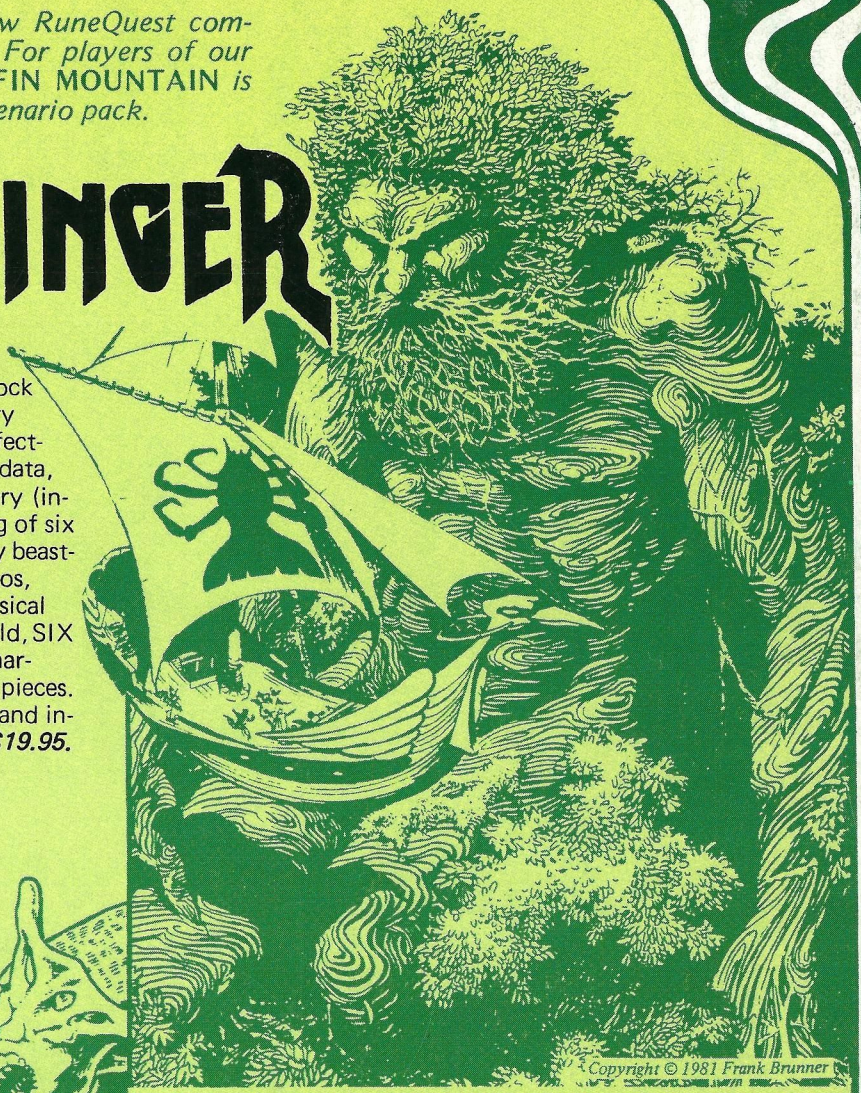

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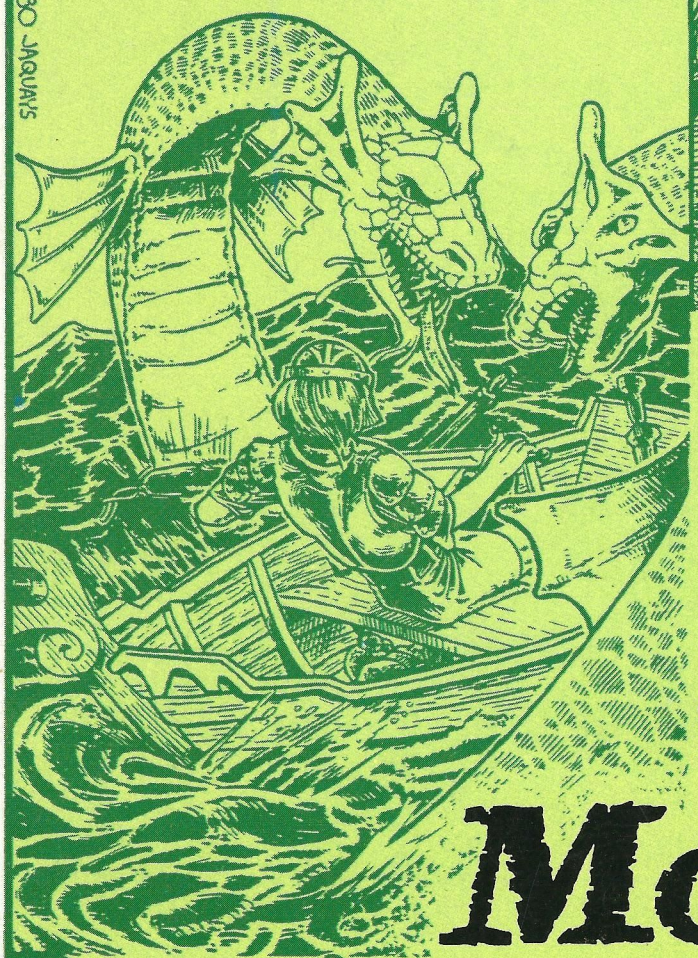

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