

LEGION

issue seven – june 2007

HELLO

Welcome to the latest issue of *Legion*. Something to keep you going until *Warpstone 27* arrives on shelves and through letterboxes.

This issue brings you a varied collection of articles. Robert Rees' letter is the only proper letter *Warpstone* has received in some time. While we don't have a letters page in *Warpstone* anymore, I think Robert's letter deserves to be printed. Not having a letters page remains one of the bigger negatives in *Warpstone*, something only readers can do something about. Doc Otto is an NPC and winning entry from our Talabheim competition. Congratulations to Thomas Abballe; we hope he enjoyed the prize. Robin Low's affectionate Curse of The Imperial Cartographers goes a long way to explaining a lot of things about Old World maps. My article on Halfling names was never finished, but there is enough to give an idea of where I was going.

We hope you enjoy *Legion*. We don't really get too much feedback on it, although the British Library is most keen to see each issue; it regularly asks when the next issue is due. So this issue is dedicated to all those at the Library and the good work they do.

WHAT'S IN A NAME? HALFLINGS BY JOHN FOODY

Halfling names are often seen as cute or quaint because so many are associated with food and nature, or the nicer side of life. This is true and Halflings take great pride in their names, seeing nothing wrong with being named after a food or herb and find little to laugh at in being called Sugar or Suet. Surnames are commonly derived from family-traits whether these still hold true or not. This is why they are usually so descriptive and indeed, many Halflings will know the story of their surname's origin.

The reason many of these names do not seem exotic to those that speak Reikspiel is because so many of the names derive from familiar words. Of course, this is only to be expected for a race with numerous meal-times and seventeen words for gravy.

The forms of address for Halflings are numerous and varied. Each member of the immediate family is given a name and this extends out to close family friends and neighbours. All forms of address are respectful. The following list covers some of the most common.

Mr, Miss and Mrs: used as normal

Mother, Matron: older woman

Father: older man

Raan: brother- in-law

Uncle: paternal side; also, family friend

Santol: uncle maternal side; also, family friend

Aunt: paternal side; also, family friend

Esme: aunt, maternal side; also, family friend

Gongee: brother; also close friend

Cisr: sister; also close friend

Sinti: cousin; also a close family friend

Coota: sister-in-law

In addition to being referred to by this title, if applicable, virtually all Halflings are given nicknames soon after birth and these are used more often than the real name within the community. This name usually refers to a physical aspect of the baby, such as rosy cheeks, smiling all the time, and so forth. Sometimes this name may be that of a relative they resemble. Halfling adventurers are likely to be embarrassed on returning home with comrades, as the family refuse to refer to the brave warrior as anything other than Dimple.

Halflings who gain a job title are called by such, whether it is Sheriff or Priest. This is considered a great honour and is used even by close family (except parents and grandparents). However, any titles gained outside the immediate community or the Moot are seldom referred to.

DOC OTTO

by Thomas Abballe

In our Talabheim competition we asked readers to detail a location or NPC in the eponymous city. Thomas Abballe's afflicted Doc Otto was the winning entry and we are pleased to present it here.

OTTO LIENWEBER (DOC OTTO) DRUG MANUFACTURER IN THE OLD CITY

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
4	31	26	3	2	6	41
A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
1	41	28	55	35	37	34

Alignment: Neutral

Skills: Chemistry, Cure Disease, Heal Wounds, Immunity to Poison, Manufacture Drugs (chemical), Prepare Poisons, Read/Write, Secret Language - Guilder.

Possessions: Apothecary furniture.

Quotes: "What you called side effects is no more than scoriae." "The drug would already be prepared, if you hadn't disturbed me."

Otto Lienweber was born in a small town of Talabecland. Quickly, it became obvious he was too intelligent to be a farmer like his parents. So they apprenticed him to the local apothecary. Otto was an eager student, but his great abilities went to his head and he became arrogant and egocentric. The very day his master finally told him his formation was finished, he left the village and its "unsympathetic and jealous inhabitants". A few days later, he arrived at Talabheim. That was ten years ago.

He spent the little gold he had to rent a

small flat and to buy second-hand materials. After only a week of intensive work, the first version of "Doctor Otto's Elixir for Strength and Toughness" was ready to be sold. However, in his arrogance, Otto deemed some side effects of his preparation trifling. Unfortunately for him, the porters who were eager to test it didn't consider strong diarrhoea insignificant. Otto managed to escape his wrathful clients, but was arrested a few days later for selling drugs without a licence.

Disheartened and penniless by an expeditious trial and a huge fine, Otto found an unexpected helpful hand in the person of Maximilian von Goetzberg, a young and dissipated noble. Maximilian offered Otto his patronage, in exchange for a percentage of the profits and in-kind advantages. Thanks to his money, Otto was able to carry out research, and two months



later a second version of the Elixir, without apparent side effects, was ready to be marketed. However, a licence was not granted. Each week, Maximilian came to Otto's laboratory asking him for specific preparations, cursing the slowness of Talabheim's administration... and leaving with an increasing stock of Otto's Elixir.

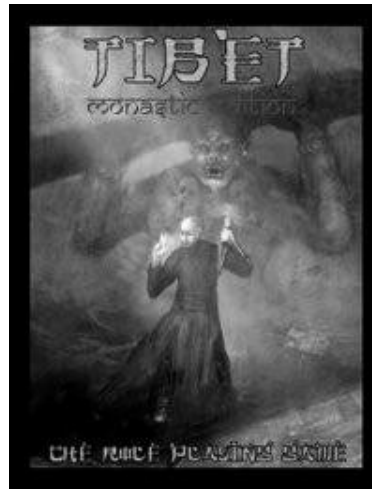
In fact, Maximilian only wanted a private and devoted apothecary, and not a source of profits: the Elixir he took each week was for his personal consumption. Unfortunately the new mixture, if safer for intestines, was also more addictive. As the months passed, Maximilian became more and more dependant on Otto's preparation. The over-consumption of Elixir touched his mind and he became lunatic and quick-tempered. One day, as Otto asked him again why the license was not granted, he exploded with rage, beat him and devastated the laboratory, leaving Otto for dead. He died a short time after of a crisis of apoplexy, during a fistfight.

When Otto woke up, he was lying in a comfortable bed, in a sober but neat room, and his injuries had been healed. A sinister man was sitting near him. He explained to Otto that he was now the property of the gang of the Wolves, and as such he was expected to work hard, if he didn't want to be "thrown away". And so started the career of Otto as a drug manufacturer: he prepares drugs, poisons and even the famous "Otto's Elixir".

Otto has changed 'owners' three or four times in the last eight years, but he does not care; the job doesn't change. In fact, he cares about almost nothing. He tries to escape reality and his disillusion by taking drugs and tries nearly all mixtures he has to prepare. Now, Otto is mere skin and bone, 26 years old but looking ten years older. Because of the fumes of his laboratory, he is nearly bald and has horrible skin infections. It also touched his mind: he suffers of Soliloquism, Megalomania and light Schizophrenia.



Tibet: The Role Playing Game **by Brian St. Claire-King** **Published by Vajra Enterprises** **Reviewed by Robin Low**



This review begins with an apology to Vajra Enterprises and Brian St. Claire-King, respectively the publisher and writer of *Tibet: The Role Playing Game*. A long time ago, I offered to review a copy of the game sent to the *Warpstone* fanzine, and it has taken me

far too long finishing this review (literally years). This game deserves to be reviewed and it deserves good reviews, so I'm sorry this one hasn't come much sooner. I should also say this is my first review of a core rulebook, so my weaknesses as a reviewer should not count against the game in anyway.

Introduction

Tibet is set in the eponymous country during the Communist Chinese invasion of the 1950s, the default starting year being 1959. Officially, the Tibetan government is in charge, but agreed to a slow conversion ('liberation' in Chinese parlance) to Communism. The reality is that more and more Chinese troops occupy parts of the country and actively propagandise, becoming increasingly hostile to native Tibetans, especially those unwilling to convert.

Against this background, we are offered a setting in which magic and karma, spirits and demons are real and active parts of the life of the country and its inhabitants. A useful comparison is with the concept of the Mediaeval Paradigm of *Ars Magica*, where what was believed during that period of history is representative of reality in the game. The same is true for *Tibet*, although GMs are still perfectly free to take a strictly realistic approach. The rulebook very effectively outlines the different approaches that GMs can take. Guerrilla warfare, political machinations and mystical activities, or combinations of each, are all within the scope of the game.

Organisation, Layout and Appearance

Tibet is a well put together book. Text is in two columns,

the font size is large enough to give a clear, comfortable read, and is broken up by numerous pictures. The vast majority of the pictures are period photographs of Tibetans and their country, and are actually relevant to adjacent text – the setting and people are probably brought to life more effectively than in many other RPGs. What original art there is, is of a good standard.

Every new heading throughout the book begins with a small grey box entitled ‘In Brief’, giving a helpful summary of no more than a two or three sentences, handy if you want quick facts or are looking for something in particular. There are also numerous black boxes with white text at the bottom of the pages that give brief meanings of terms used within nearby text. This is very helpful if things have been described elsewhere and you’ve forgotten what they were.

There are numerous cross-references to other relevant parts of the book, with page numbers (I found only a couple of examples of page XX). The game has an excellent contents page and an index that works when I checked a few entries at random (although it’s not as comprehensive as it could be). Additionally there are glossaries of Tibetan terms and game terms.

Describing the Setting

The setting, in terms of history, politics, geography and culture, is remarkably well-described, and the writing style offers flavour and insight, rather than dry lessons. The information provided is thorough but not laboriously over-detailed, giving background and facts that are both interesting and useful for GMs wanting to get to grips with the setting before presenting it to the players. This is the best description of a real-world country in a gaming context I’ve read. I cannot speak for its accuracy, but it seems a great resource.

Character Creation and Skill Use

Creation begins with the character concept, which covers issues of gender, name (quite a complex and interesting issue), ethnicity, attitude to the Chinese, attitude to violence, religious beliefs and vows. Character Attributes are familiar, but include Karma (see below), and are bought with points. An additional points pool is spent on health attributes: Body (withstanding blunt damage), Blood (withstanding damage to vital organs) and Incapacity (keeping going before being incapacitated). Optional sub-attributes can modify attributes – the given example is a character who is not very strong over-all but is deemed to have strong hands as a result of his profession, a rather good idea in my view. The player gets a pool of 90 points to spend on 9 attributes, scores ranging from 1 to 20. Sub-attributes cost or give 1 point. Health attributes range from 1 to 6, with 12 points to spend.

Karma is an interesting part of the game, and characters have a base Karma score and a current score that fluctuates according to recent actions. It’s important to realise that it is the *effects* and not the intentions of actions that affect Karma. An individual’s Karma affects those around him, influencing their own current Karma and helping benevolent or malevolent magic. Negative Karma also attracts the attentions of malevolent spirits. High Karma allows the performance of miracles.

The next step is choosing a character class. Classes in *Tibet* are more akin to careers in *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*, so calling them classes is arguably a mistake as it gives the wrong impression. *Tibet*’s classes are all about a character’s place in Tibetan society. There are twenty-five in all, and range from the seemingly mundane (Farmer, Aristocrat, Craftsperson, Merchant) to the religious (Kahyupa Monk, Yellow Hat Monk, Nyingmapa Monk) to the magical (Mirror Gazer, Oracle, Sorcerer). However, this is not a game in which playing a magical character is automatically more attractive. Even humble farmers have access to skills in divination, exorcism and sorcery. Very cleverly, the designers have created a system where the points costs of skills vary between classes: a farmer gets his levels in farming for free, craft skills are relatively cheap, but sorcery eats up points, western knowledge even more.

Skills are separated into twelve groups: Combat, Crafts, Divination, Exorcism, Folk Knowledge, Medicine, Scholarship, Sorcery, Tantra, Travel, Weathermaking and Western Knowledge. Skills within these categories range from the familiar (Archery, Gambling, Tibetan Law) to many that are specific to the setting (Fire Exorcism, Disease Sorcery, Yidram Tantra). In other games, many of the magical skills would be reduced to specific spells, but this approach offers greater flexibility in use and variability in outcome.

Each skill has an associated Attribute. A specific action within the scope of each skill is given a difficulty number (ranging from 0 for automatic success, 10 for an easy action, up to 40 for a Legendary action). To determine the success or failure of an action, 1d20 is rolled and added to the character’s relevant attribute. Modifiers may be applied. If the player achieves a score equal to or greater than the difficulty of the action then the character is successful. Further information is given for certain circumstances such as when two attributes are relevant, for opposed rolls, times when a character has the chance to stop before he fails, and others. Attributes themselves are relevant in a range of circumstances. For example, Willpower is used in opposed rolls to resist mental manipulation. Charm is used to determine how successful a persuasion attempt is, but the difficulty is determined by the GM based on the roleplaying and argument offered by the player, an

excellent way of encouraging roleplay.

Characters also choose *attachments* which help define personality. Buddhism teaches that bad Karma and suffering come from people latching on to ideas, beliefs, emotions and material things. Truly letting go of these things leads to enlightenment. Attachments are grouped into physical (examples: alcohol, fame, prized possession, safety), self (examples: forgiving, sceptical, truthful, worthless) and universe (examples: brutality, humour, justice, paranoid, utilitarian). Attachments can assist when characters are faced with something that could harm an attachment. Some attachments are considered *dark*, in that they are likely to cause serious difficulties for the character, and likely others, and give a bonus point. Attachments are easy to acquire or change, but hard to get rid of. There are rules for losing attachments and gaining enlightenment – I can see these being interesting personal objectives for individual characters. I'd have liked to have seen more discussion on the roleplaying aspects of all this, but on the other hand the rules mechanisms are in place and individual GMs and groups can apply their own gaming preferences to the roleplaying side of things.

There is also a system of characteristic bonuses, together with advantages and disadvantages. Disadvantages give positive bonus points, advantages negative bonus points. Bonus points can also be gained or lost by giving up or increasing Attribute, Health, and Skill points, or taking less money. Positive bonus points can be used to increase points available for spending on those characteristics or on advantages. All this number juggling must be balanced. My only criticism here is that this section of the character creation rules should have come much earlier, so that the various points pools were sorted out first.

Magic and Fighting

Magic is dealt with using the game's normal skill use mechanism, which I personally like a lot. Various components (examples: meditation, ritual objects, offerings, chanting) may be required, but attempts can still be made without them for an increase in the difficulty.

Each combat skill lists a range of actions that are possible with each skill, which usually provide bonuses. However, there is a good range of combat actions available to all, even those without specific combat skills. Combat is resolved through a series of opposed actions/ reactions from the participants. The system was not playtested, so I won't comment in any more detail, but on paper it certainly looks interesting.

Campaign Material

The final chapter is entitled Adventure, and this section

provides many ideas on how to use the setting. It briefly looks at getting groups of PCs together, before going on to consider Military, Political, Ceremonial and Mystical Adventures. These sections are not so much scenario seeds, but advice on relevant issues and suggestions. For example, Military Adventures talks of Sabotage and Escape to India, and discusses Chinese Troops. Mystical Adventures speaks of Mad Saints and the dangerous and foolish tasks they might set characters. Alongside this, the dangers of travel (everything from crossing gorges and rivers to bandits and wild animals) and magical threats (sections on supernatural creatures, haunted locations and cursed objects) are discussed. There are a lot of ideas here.

Tibet has two scenarios. The first surrounds a "Struggle Session", a practice developed by the Communist Chinese where those seen to have deviated from Mao's dictates undergo public torture until they acknowledge their mistake. Chinese troops are trying to break the morale of a town by breaking the devotion of local monks. Of course, there are other things going on behind the scenes. The second scenario involves a search for a hidden valley, with opportunities for roleplaying and more physical and mystical conflict. Both scenarios make for interesting introductions to the game and setting.

Why should *Tibet: The Roleplaying Game* interest WFRP GMs and Players?

There are some similarities between *Tibet* and WFRP. Both are self-contained games that are complete in themselves (not quite so true for WFRP2, admittedly). Character creation is built upon the idea of careers. Perhaps most interestingly, *Tibet* might be used as source material for the unknown lands of Ind or Cathay in the Warhammer World. Obviously, GMs will have to do some conversion work in terms of rules, but the ideas are there and are worth taking advantage of.

Overall

I'll resist giving the usual scores, as I don't much care for that approach. Instead, I'll say that I really enjoyed reading *Tibet*. It's interesting and well-written in its own right, and the setting feels particularly rich. I think the rules are certainly worth a look. Character creation might not be as fast as some games, but the way it is done feels particularly right to me. Even if you never plan to use the rules and setting as written, *Tibet* still provides excellent material for games such as *Call of Cthulhu*, *Savage Worlds*, and even *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* if you plan on travelling further abroad. And of course, any oriental-themed games can undoubtedly make good use of *Tibet*.

The game's site can be found at
www.tibetpgr.com!/Tibet/index.htm

LETTER RE WARPSTONE 23 BY ROBERT REES

Archetypes

I have just finished the article by Rev. Lepper regarding the use of Archetypes as an adjunct to Careers in the First Edition game. The article was a good one but I felt the idea could be pushed even further. One thing I have never liked about careers is that they tend to describe what a character was rather than what they are or what they are becoming. In general a character is not a Wizard's Apprentice or a Carter but is someone who used to be one of those things and is now on the complex and muddled path of a chaos fighter, wanderer or mercenary.

The Archetype provides a kind of overarching structure to a character's development that defines where the character is trying to get to (or perhaps where they *need* to get to) and how well they match the Archetype in terms of their abilities and the Advancements remaining.

I thought one improvement might be to have a Special Ability for each Archetype (or perhaps several but only one of which may be selected at a time) and have them accessible only by taking or possessing all of the Advancements. I suspect this is the way the Special Abilities were meant to be used but the article was a bit non-specific on the issue.

I instantly agreed with the potential extension of the system into the cultural dimension (although I must confess that here I am strongly influenced by the Forgotten Realms use of Cultural, Racial and Regional Feats) but also saw that you could go beyond this.

You could consider a character to be made up of a number of axes along which they develop continually (and generally in a positive and progressive way). There is the narrative archetype of the character, the cultural dimension of what a good Stirlander or Dwarf or Halfling is, some more general goal of a career as a soldier or a wizard, the personal storyline of the character and so on. Many, many different ways of looking at the character. All of which

combine to provide a set of advancements that both help define a character and also measure how the character is doing in achieving various goals within the game.

To some extent these different axes might overlap, for example a Bretonnian squire might have a narrative arc about becoming a hero, a cultural goal of becoming a famous Knight and similarly a career structure focussing on becoming a Knight as well. Having a multi-faceted approach though allows more nuances to the character. For example a character may have acquired the various trappings and skills required to be a Knight along with the title but if they are lagging behind on their cultural goal you might have a character who was seen as *gauche*, *arriviste* or simply lacking any genuine expression of the ideals of chivalry.

Another virtue would be the creation of choice in terms of advancement, instead of just slogging through your current career or moving to another you would be able to make a choice from several sets of advancements and your choice would not be driven just by convenience or utility but as the advancements indicate progress in a given direction would also indicate something about your character's progress in the world.

Are you entirely career-driven or do you value the abilities and skills that your countrymen admire?

A final praiseworthy aspect of the system would be that some of the "progression arcs" would actually extend across the whole of the character's life instead of the more short-term careers. This would help shape a character's story arc within a campaign.

I hope the Rev. Lepper or some of the other *Warpstone* writers take up the challenge to expand on the concept. I must confess that I was disappointed by the rather conservative retention of most of the career system structure from WFRP1 in the new game. Prior to the announcement of the Second Edition there had been some interesting discussion on how the Careers system could be reworked or re-invented. Some of the ideas were probably a bit radical for a conventional fantasy game



but I think there's room for some very different takes on character progression within the game that people can use or not as they see fit. I would certainly prefer to see this kind of "rule expansion" than just the extra careers, spells or minor polishes that bedevilled the thinking on the first edition.

Artwork

The artwork was terrific as usual but I felt the pieces illustrating the liche article were especially strong. I found them all atmospheric and visually striking.

WFRP2

I still cannot decide whether to get a copy or not. Since the IP issues seem to have GW in knots and mean that I cannot write and publish material about the game world freely the only thing left is a new games system and I already have plenty of those that I'm not using. Overall the internet reaction seems to have been pretty good although half the time I think internet reaction is mostly run off the hype and pleasure in buying new product rather than a measured view of the good and bad points of a new release.

I have had a look at *Plundered Vaults* though. The cover is fantastic but I was disappointed to see that half of the book is reprinted material. The name gives a clue of course but I didn't realise they meant it so literally. Grapes of Wrath is a great scenario and almost makes the book worth buying by itself in my view, except of course that I already own it. Along with *A Rough Night at the Three Feathers*; although I never felt that scenario was quite as clever as it made out. Overall though I felt it was a disappointing opening. Reprinting "classic" material may be a smart move but only as the second or third scenario set. Surely with a brand new system you'd want to put out new material to show the new strengths of the system and highlight some of the changes that have come with shifting the game's timeline. Scenarios are often something worth having regardless of game system but this particular deal is one that is pretty easy to pass on at the moment. I wouldn't object to a cheaper second-hand copy at some point in the future though.

Liber Fanatica

Wim introduced this during TimCon (although I did end up confused as to which bits I could read and

which were still under the WFRP2 gagging order). The physical layout of the booklets is stunning, very clean with plenty of artwork breaking up the flow of text and sensitive handling of the various tables and charts.

As to the concept of the project I was instantly uncertain of the virtue of adding WFRP1 back into WFRP2. It felt more like having a Version 1+ than Version 2.1. Take for example the idea of re-introducing Rogue, Academic, etc. classifications of careers. I always felt that the divisions were somewhat arbitrary and absurd. While I had some sympathy with the argument that if you are going to roll for a character type you might want to narrow the selections somewhat rather than roll on an uber-chart. What I would have preferred though is to see more variety of charts based on more specific criteria. Perhaps a Lower Class Imperial Citizen chart or a Wanderer or a Moot chart. Just reintroducing the old categories seems to be falling between stools.

It is also interesting to see the potential for the fracturing of the rulebase, do you play 1, 1+ or 2? It doesn't harm D&D of course but the base of players is much larger there. It is also tempting to say that if there is such an extensive addition to the game rules why not go all the way and just spin off a new game? I believe Wim said that the group had expressly wanted to build an addition to Version 2 rather than a replacement but I don't know how that will not happen without there being something compelling in the new rulebook.

TimCon

I enjoyed TimCon III (advertised last iss) yet again and was surprised that more people did not attend. The games were great and I felt very inspired by all the great ideas being tossed around. If someone like myself (who is more of a fellow traveller really) enjoys it then I would have thought it was unmissable for real WFRP fans.

Perhaps the problem is the advertising? Independent events like these should really be encouraged rather than smothered by over-officious company reps. If they carry on like this the company will be posting a massive loss... oh wait a minute...

Best if I stop here then.

THE LEGION INTERVIEW: BASIL BARRETT

Questions by Toby Pilling

Back in issue 16, Toby Pilling gave us a history of the Doomstones scenario *Who are the Feathered Priests?*. One of the authors of the original Doomstones scenarios was Basil Barrett. Here Toby talks to Basil.

First of all, could you provide a short biographical summary?

Of me? Made me laugh, this one, why would anyone want to know? I'm 44 (on Monday) years old, never married, 3 kids that live with me every other week (oldest 14), had a fairly unconventional life with lots of different jobs, have had parts of my life when I've considered myself wealthy and parts poor and enjoyed the poor parts more. Always been into gaming and music – used to be a (shit) drummer.

How did you get into role-playing, and what are your favourite rule systems, modules and/or campaign settings?

Been into it since forever. Used to have a wargames club at school and did conventional Napoleonic/ancients/WW2 type stuff. Always fascinated by more detailed 1 to 1 type rules systems and at school we had started playing a sort of 1 to 1 magic and combat skirmish game in tunnels and caves based on my adaptation of a Wargames Research Group supplement to their ancients rules to include magic (Minifigs had brought out a Lord of the Rings range and suddenly wargamers everywhere were experimenting with these sort of ideas). We based it around the other players controlling individual characters and mounting an expedition of a small party into Moria – sound familiar? As soon as an American friend came back from a trip home with an early D&D set we just used those rules instead as they were more fully developed and it all snowballed from there.

I've always felt that a rules system is just a matter of personal preference. It's surprisingly easy to write for multi system or to convert from one to another – it's the setting, atmosphere, characterisation, attention to detail, etc. that count. I've always hated the combat and magic systems from D&D/AD&D and yet that's often 90% of playing the game! I generally enjoyed D&D/AD&D more than other games simply because the scenarios were generally better written and character progression although flawed and open to abuse was still better than any other system – I'm

sure saying that would wind a lot of people up, but that doesn't mean it isn't true. Most people I know that have played for a reasonable length of time really don't get hung up on rules and have a more 'interactive' storytelling type approach with use of dice rolls really to add a random element to parts of play. Otherwise they'd just be back to playing a small-scale wargame with magic. Make sense?

I like the *RuneQuest* combat and magic, but ironically RQ scenarios tend to be very much hack and slay/dungeon bashing – the very thing that RQ players criticise D&D for! *Tunnels and Trolls* is a good fast and dirty system and excellent for solos, but character progression is weak. *Chivalry and Sorcery* was interesting but didn't really add anything, *Middle Earth Role-Playing* had a combat system that looked great on paper, but otherwise had little to recommend it. *Dragonroar* wasn't as bad as people said but just didn't have enough support materials. *Toon* and *Paranoia* are both a hoot as an occasional diversion from your normal game. All the Avalon Hill offerings were weak – sorry! – but their conventional games like *Panzerblitz* and *Richthofen's* are superb! There're so many others I've seen over the years I couldn't even name most of them. Loved the *Lost Worlds* books (okay not roleplay, but great combat, have tried in the past using this as the combat part of role-play games but never quite got it to mesh). *Call of Cthulhu* – loved reading the scenarios but never actually played it. So many others we could look at.

WFRP I thought was a superb attempt to mesh tabletop with a new style of roleplay. Although it was widely slagged off for its simplifications in armour and weapons, I really felt that these made play more enjoyable not less (more complex is not better, it's just more complex). Also it effectively came with pre-generated support material/background through being based on *Warhammer* – huge advantage. The whole industry was moving from rigid character progression D&D style to skills-based systems (see *Fantasy Trip* below) and WFRP caught this wave. However although it came with a wealth of background, early scenarios were poor and did it no favours – sorry guys, a lot of my friends in the industry worked on these.

My own games are always based on meshing parts

of different rules systems – the combat and magic is normally closest to *Melee/Wizard/Fantasy Trip* which is probably the best set of rules ‘as written’ but again floundered due to being little more than magic and combat, no extensive background, and poor support scenarios/materials.

Would take me for ever to list modules and campaigns, so I’m not even going to try!

The Complete Dungeon Master series was very unusual in that it included comprehensive floor plans for all the complexes within the modules. How did the idea for the series come about? Did it turn out as you hoped?

CDM came about as a result of chance meeting between myself and Si Forest (effectively the *Tortured Souls!*/*Zhalindor* scenario writing team) and Allen Hickling of Endless Plans at a Games Day. We talked about it and formed a joint company. The idea was to put absolutely everything in the box so that a DM would have all they needed to play much higher quality scenarios. Originally we wanted to include metal figures of key/new monsters and characters as well, but this wasn’t practical so we dropped the idea and concentrated on areas like the Artefacts (much better in the original series than the weak GW WFRP versions).



Have you ever played Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay, and if so, what did you think of it?

Yep. But not as much as I would have liked. Loved it. Was commissioned by GW to write support materials, but never did as their legal department didn’t appear to be capable of raising an appropriate contract. Unfortunately moved out of gaming during the period when better (so I’m told) support materials were being published

How did GW get the rights to convert the CDM series to the Doomstones campaign, and what, if any, was your involvement?

Simple – they bought the rights, we had no further involvement. We were all very disappointed with the published results (first we saw of it – we didn’t get to see any work in progress). I really think that GW just regarded it as a way of buying more bulk of material for WFRP without really appreciating the ethos behind the CDM series.

What work was done on completing the CDM series through the final part: *Deep Water – Shallow Graves*? Could you supply a precis of the plot?

Plot very simple. Unlike the earlier scenarios you got the Crystal right at the beginning, but then had to use it (in combination with others) to fight your way out again.

As the name suggests, set under water (using water breathing ability of crystal). Scenario starts with party rowing across a marsh to a mysterious leaning tower (on one of the earlier CDM artefacts maps) part submerged in marsh (in actual fact marsh was formed due to crystal attracting water long after tower built). En route attacked and swallowed (boat and all) by huge mutant creature that lairs in bottom of tower. Party have limited time/air before digested to find

crystal and some other artefacts that have survived the stomach acid and hack way out of body to emerge in flooded cavern at bottom of tower. Tower now colonised by Sahuagin, and basically a fairly linear trek up the tower to get out again, but with all the problems of moving/fighting/using magic underwater (even if you can breathe).

Generic floorplans for the tower (another great system from Allen) were produced (I’ve still got the rough drafts) but that’s about as far

as it got.

Are you still in contact with any of the original designers, artists or even playtesters? Simon Forrest? The Hicklings? Could you provide a summary in the style of ‘Where are they now?’

Allen is a specialist management consultant working on conflict resolution (he always was an old hippy) for people like the Dutch government (more old hippies). At one point Allen was retiring and Brendan (his son – did most of the artefacts) taking over, but not sure if that happened. Judith has always been an artist. Si had a brief period where he ‘sold out’ to GW (think he edited *White Dwarf*?) and then went all straight and respectable. Still talk to Allen occasionally but haven’t seen Si for years – shame, he was a very close friend for a long while.

Are you still gaming? If so, what do you play these days?

Very little time. Pretend to play Lord of the Rings but

actually just collect the figures. Getting my kids into role-playing at the moment so watch this space.

Are there any prospects of you writing or designing any role-playing products?

If somebody sent me a sensible contract I'd do it tomorrow. However I never work 'on spec' at writing.

You spent some time working for a computer games company. Did you help develop any games we may have heard of?

Simple answer would be 'No' – the company did Carmageddon which was a mite controversial in its day so suited me ideally, but they'd just about finished Carma 2 when I joined. They were an outstanding games developer and produced some truly innovative product, none of which saw light of day due to the usual industry politics. Still own a percentage of the company (make no money whatsoever from it!) and some of the guys are my closest friends. Great period of my life, but it's a long story for another day.

What do you say to those who claim that the Doomstones campaign is little more than a dungeon bash, is too 'high fantasy', and doesn't work as a D&D conversion? (A viewpoint far from my own, I must add)

I think that you have to look at things in their historical perspective. At the time the CDM series was about as far from a dungeon bash as you could get – sure Dwarven Kings/Kasar-Khan were underground – but from CDM3 onwards that all changed as the series became linked by the Crystals. Even then the feeling of claustrophobia of CDM1 and 2 ideally suited the Dwarven background and Earth Crystal connection. CDM3 had a fire setting at the end, but was disjointed partly accidentally (see below) and partly because I wanted to break the vogue for linear tasks and create a real confusion in the players as to what they were doing and why to match the 'crystal out of it's proper setting' nature. By the way, the CDM series never was a D&D setting – it was always intended to be systemless (although in a lot of ways I still believe the overall feel behind it should have been at least as well suited to a WFRP environment than the worlds of other rules systems) so the *Doomstones* version should never have been a conversion – just additional information.

Looking back, if you could do anything differently about the campaign, or add anything, what would you do?

When CDM 1 and 2 were written, we hadn't thought of the Crystals. Si Forest did an awesome job with CDM1 where his brief was to create the most

enormous underground complex he could with a limited set of plans and everything just ran from there. Sure there was mention in CDM2 of a Crystal being used (we may have expanded on this in the reprint after CDM3 had been written – can't remember), and this gave us the ideas for later, but the whole series hadn't been mapped out. We were treading new ground with CDM1 and unlike the Zhalindor Campaign which had some great underlying concepts that have STILL never been revealed, we simply hadn't thought that far ahead. This gave me major problems with the story part of CDM3 trying to tie lots of loose threads together and provide the foundation for the rest of the series. It was also written under great time pressure at a very low point in my life – I'm eternally grateful to Allen for effectively putting me up at his house and giving me a purpose in life to scrape myself back together again! CDM3 would be much improved by a complete re-write. CDM4 we loved making, and were really excited about CDM5 as well, we offered to develop for/sell the ideas to GW, but they just wanted material they could quickly convert to WFRP and get on the shelf (I'm not knocking them here, at that point GW were by far the most professional outfit in the UK games industry and appreciated the need to get support material out for WFRP as fast as possible rather than wasting time striving for higher quality).

I'll just say again that I think the CDM campaign is superb, and works brilliantly as a conversion to WFRP.

Cheers! A well-written scenario should be easy to adapt for ANY rules system/campaign – It's really funny to step back and watch people argue about which rules system or world setting is better than others – think they're really missing the point!

Legion Credits

Editors: The usual suspects.

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THE CURSE OF THE IMPERIAL CARTOGRAPHERS

By Robin Low

The Imperial Cartography Workshop, based in Altdorf, is famed for both its beautifully illustrated maps and its remarkable inability to produce two of said items carrying identical information. Military commanders, lawyers and travellers alike have all scratched their heads and stared perplexed at two ICW maps carrying the same date, but showing towns on different sides of rivers, shifting political borders and wandering mountains. Complaints invariably fall on deaf ears.

This confusing state of affairs is not entirely ICW's fault. The workshop in Altdorf is located on top of a near-forgotten temple of Ranald and the man who founded the workshop, Gunter Verne, was one of the Trickster god's Priests. Verne also painted the original map of the Empire that became the template for all subsequent maps. A magnificent fully-painted work, the Great Map covers one entire, huge wall on the ground floor of the workshop. On it can be found all the major mountain ranges, forests and rivers, major cities and provincial borders. Unfortunately for the current cartographers, this masterpiece was intended as a glorious, ongoing joke dedicated to Ranald. At the god's whim, features on it move, change or vanish, the names of places suddenly acquire different spellings, and distances shorten or lengthen. A similar problem exists with the master copies of smaller scale maps in the ICW's drawers. Nobody ever sees it happen, and the finely cracked and ancient varnish proves that no paint brush has secretly been at work making changes. One old cartographer (once apprenticed to Verne) who died two winters back once claimed after a glass of wine too many that he had seen the Wandering Island of the Fimir appear from nowhere and travel west along the coast of the Sea of Claws

All the current artists and scribes are aware of the Great Map's peculiarities. Over the years, many a younger worker has attempted to create a new master map of their own, only to find changes to their own maps, made in their own hand and with no sign of over-painting or over-writing. Very quickly, people learn to accept what the Great Map shows them. These changes are normally subtle enough for the cartographers to pass-off the changes as honest mistakes (confused map-readers are less generous).

The ICW are far from the only map-makers in the Empire, but many of the others use master maps produced by the ICW as the basis for their own, which

perpetuates errors and oddities. One cartographer of note is Alfred von Nuln of the Collegium Historica. Another is one of von Nuln's students who has set up the Dark Rainbow Studios to continue his mentor's good work. Some of these other map-makers are beginning to recruit suitable people (artists, scribes, scouts, scholars, etc.) to survey particular areas either to verify the details of the ICW maps or produce brand new and up to date ones. The ICW has also tried to do this, but the group they hired to re-map the County of Wissenland hasn't been seen or heard of for over a year.

The god Ranald sometimes takes an interest in the maps sold by the workshops above his forgotten temple. As a trickster god, Ranald is not averse to using his godly influence to make subtle alterations to such maps. Often, his changes are intended as pure jokes, but sometimes he has a purpose. Perhaps the god wishes to misdirect those who are pursuing one of his followers. Perhaps he wants someone to go to a particular place as part of a greater scheme, and the best way to do it is to make that person think she is going somewhere completely different! Furthermore, strange features will appear on the maps in unknown areas of forest or moor, such as small images of buildings or peculiar animals, tiny scrolled legends proclaiming 'Here be something worthy!' or 'Best avoid the Wolf-Tree here!', or symbols with no obvious meaning. Clearly, Ranald is as much a tempter as a trickster.

Gods of Cartography

There is no specific god of map-making. Instead, cartographers acknowledge gods who have a link to their craft. For example, most Imperial map-makers look to Sigmar - who better to aid them in defining the lands of the Empire than its founder, greatest hero and god? In the lands of Tilea, Estalia and the Border Princes, Mymidia is also the goddess of map-makers - as a military strategist, Mymidia has an obvious interest in the creation of accurate maps showing terrain, roads and settlements. Additionally, Verena as goddess of truth and learning is often revered by those seeking to accurately record the land. Those of a less scholarly bent, such as thieves mapping warehouse districts, layouts of rich households and the best escape routes across roofs, along streets and through sewers look to Ranald, who as we know has a fondness for maps.