
Tales of the Reaching Moon

The RuneQuest™ Magazine

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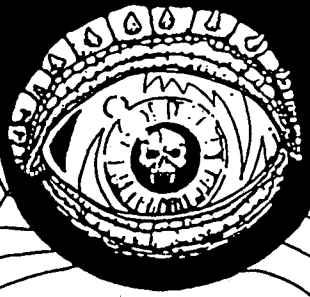


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Eat at Geo's

Ancestor Quest

Elder Secrets Review



WELCOME
 TO
 DRAGON EYE
 GRAPHICS



51 APFLEYARD PLACE
 OLDBROOK
 MILTON KEYNES
 MK6 2FW

Character Art Fantasy - S.F. Illustration & Design

Tales of the Reaching Moon

The RuneQuest™ Magazine

EDICT

Welcome to issue three. Firstly I must apologise for its lateness. Unfortunately Matt Tudor had to pull out of the fanzine. He's asked me to print the following letter:

Dear Tales,

A short apology for the lateness of this issue. I must take most of the blame. Work commitments meant I couldn't spend as much time as I'd have liked to on the production.

For this reason combined with "editorial differences" I've decided to drop out.

I wish Tales every success in the future.

MATTHEW TUDOR.

To help me cope with this situation the Australians have kindly offered to produce issue four, which should be out in only a couple of months.

I would like to point out that this is only an amateur set up, the zine is produced in my spare time. Therefore the frequency of production will always be erratic. Neither am I a professional layout artist so I make no claims as to the production quality. I'll try and make the zine look better each issue, but I won't always succeed.

Price Rise

Due largely to increased printing costs and the fact that I'm now on my own financially a price rise is on the cards from next issue. Sorry an'all that, but you are getting more pages as well!

White Wolf

On to other matters. You may be interested to know that *Esdevium Games* in Aldershot have recently received a consignment of this US magazine. The mag is reminiscent of the late (?) *Different Worlds*, covering a variety of obscure and less popular games. It has so far featured three RQ cults by Greg Stafford and Sandy Petersen, Mostal (#15), Yelm (#16) & Donander (#18).

RuneQuest Artwork

Not-a-lot of people know this but *Chaosium* has no control over the artwork that goes into RuneQuest supplements - which explains quite a lot! In fact the Aussies are so disgusted with the most recent artwork (see the "friendly dark elves" and Zorak Zoran breakdancers in *Troll Gods*) that they have started a campaign to write to Avalon Hill to complain. If you feel the same way then please write and exert a bit of consumer pressure.

Australian "Guild of Scenario Designers"

Staying in Australia a guild has been set up to help writers improve scenario design, assist with playtesting, and help gain publication. For further info contact:

Mark Holsworth, 28 Graham Street, Pascoe Vale 3044, Victoria, Australia.

Newsletter

For all you "Tales.." freaks and budding contributors out there, there is now an irregular newsletter which has various bits of news on the zine, pleas for articles, and anything else which seems relevant. If you want copies then send me an SSAE and 10p for as many as you want. Furriners amongst you contact your local "Tales.." megacorp rep.

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Conjunction

There's not much time left to book for the RQ Con of the decade, so hurry up! For those that are going make sure you turn up to the Eat at Geo's Party on the Saturday lunchtime.

Holiday Glorantha...

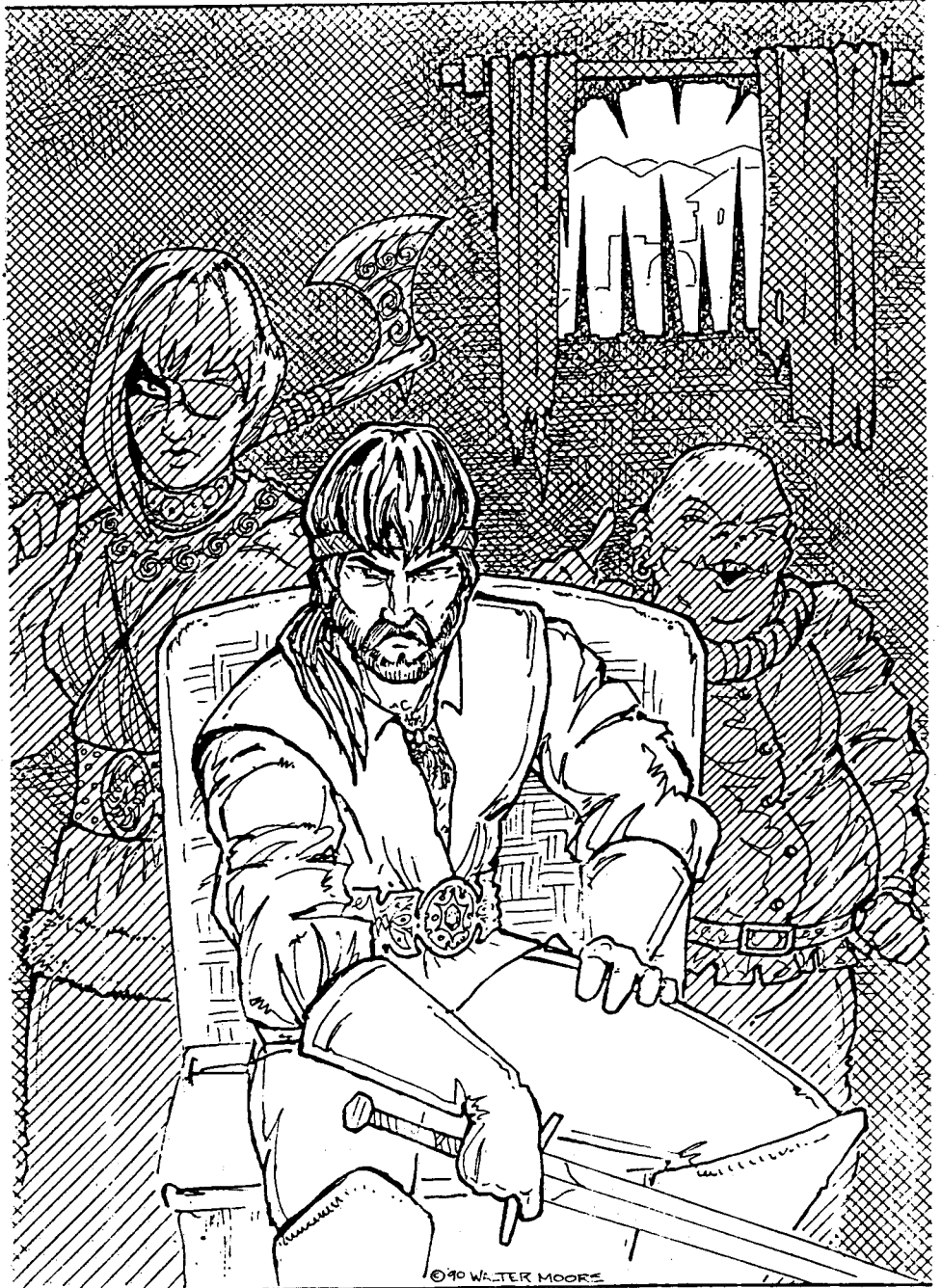
WELL, EACH to his own, as they used to say, but I have to comment that David Hall's idea of Adari (in *Tales 1*) was not much like mine, which, I can claim, was based on Divinations to the Creator God as well as research in the sacred sources. I offer it here, not so much as a cameo as a setting.

GM's, do your players hanker for a wide-open town, without those petty restrictions found so often in the law-ridden territories? Might they feel like bossing such a town, Wild West style, or cleaning it up if their tastes run to honourable deeds? Then Adari is the place for them. There may be others, here and there, but Adari is the most accessible and after all isn't it famous? Didn't Pavis himself come from there?

Overheard in a New Pavis bar: "So you're from Adari, huh? Well, I guess that shows something to your credit." "How's that?" "Why, that you're smart." "How do you make that out?" "Because you aren't there anymore. Everyone around here knows that one of the smartest things our glorious Founder ever did was move out of Adari, haw haw haw!" (General amusement on part of locals, followed not infrequently by a fight).

People from Adari do not like to admit it, but the Pavis view is substantially correct. Adari is a hole, a dump, famous for being a good place to get out of. It is of so little value to the Lunars that they prefer to leave it alone, on the grounds that it would need a large garrison to secure it and put down the endemic local banditry, and is too remote to threaten their control of Prax. If some ruler did look like being a threat to their interests, they would move, but they have confidence that this is unlikely to happen.

Adari was once a stone-walled city with a population of more than 3,000, most of them refugees from the spreading power of the Empire of the Wyrms' Friends. Even at that time Adari was a recognised place



Ofnili and pals

The start of a new series exploring the towns, cities & temples of Glorantha. This issue Oliver Dickinson takes an impala on a trek north of Tada's High Tumulus...

Adari

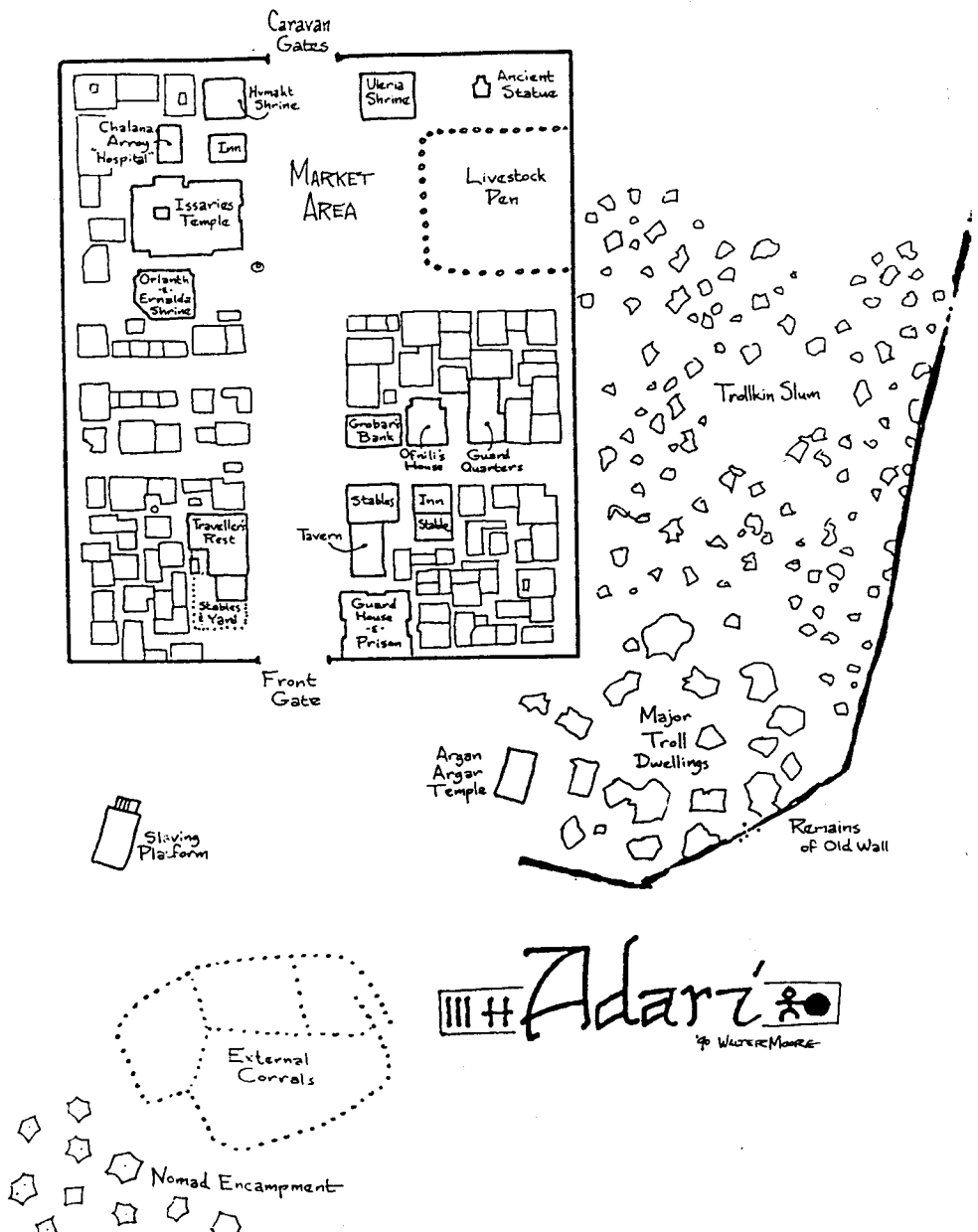
to trade with the troll tribes to the north, and also with the God Learner population of the city named Robcradle, the ruins of which lie among the Big Rubble. The connection with Robcradle proved the downfall of this first Adari, which was destroyed by Paragua the giant and his allies nine years after they destroyed Robcradle and eight centuries previous to the present.

About five centuries ago, long after the city of Pavis had been established, the Dragonkill War and the annihilation of the Jrusteli occurred within a generation of each other. Dazed survivors, leaving the sites of genocide behind, fled eastwards. Those who escaped vengeful nomads mostly sought the sanctuary of Pavis, but a few found the near-deserted Issaries temple and patch of wall that remained of old Adari, and settled there.

A century later, a troll army from Dagori Inkarth, led by a Karrg's Son named Gerak Kag, captured Pavis. Stragglers from this army found and resettled Adari, side by side with its human occupants. Another century of isolation followed, a period of fierce nomad raids in which Adari was rebuilt many times. Then new barbarian peoples began to settle Dragon Pass, and with the coming of Sartar Peacemaker and the Pol Joni 'cattle bastards', Adari flourished once again as a trading town.

Another century passed, and in 1550 the town of New Pavis was established by settlers from Sartar, fearing the invasion threatening from Peloria. But the respite was brief. The Lunar Empire staged two invasions of Prax. The first, in 1608, was driven off by the nomads before it reached the Paps. The second, in 1610, defeated the nomads, captured New Pavis, and secured control of Prax. On both occasions the Lunar army by-passed Adari, whose position in the generally arid Bison Plains is well removed from the natural routes through Prax.

The basic reason for Adari's



capacity to renew itself so tenaciously is its position as a centre for traders from three main sources: northern Sartar and Lunar Tarsh, Dagori Inkarth, and Pavis. Slavers come here and also nomads, particularly of the Pol Joni and, since Ofnili took over, Morokanth peoples, and wandering hunters come in from the Bison Plains, where wild herds are often found.

To such people it is a great place, with its wooden stockade and thriving market, which is protected by a Create Market spell kept permanently in being. The potential profits and relative safety attract many caravans, which swell the population considerably for much of

the year. But although at times Adari may be a reasonably run, if rough, place, more often it will justify its dire reputation.

The town consists of two sections, the stockade and the troll area. The stockade contains a few broad streets, with alleys running between and behind them; it holds a fluctuating (300-600) population of humans and non-trolls. The fine Issaries temple is the most impressive feature; other cults (Orlanth and Ernald, Humakt, Uleria) can support only shrines, Chalana Arroyo not even that, though there are usually a few Healers about, and the town is so faction-ridden that there is no cult of a town god.

Holiday Glorantha...

The human population includes a large element of nomads who have decided to settle down as merchants or craftworkers, but maintain their hereditary antagonisms for the most part; there are many Sartarites, and members of almost any race of Dragon Pass can be found. An unusually high proportion are criminals, outlaws, exiles, or malcontents of some kind. Only Aldryami are unlikely to venture here, for the local trolls have a most untraditional taste for eating them freshly roasted in impromptu street parties (and they are unlikely to be bothered about killing the Aldryami first!). The dominant language is Praxian, but Sartarite, Tradetalk, and Darktongue are widely spoken and many inhabitants will be competent in one or more of these.

The troll population is not protected by the stockade (they would only eat holes in it), but is considerably larger (c.2,000, 70% being trollkin) and in fact, despite human grumbling at their presence, provides the main deterrent against nomad attack. Their area contains the usual random, shifting scatter of structures which, especially in the trollkin slums, look most like garbage dumps. The only fixed points are the temples of Kyger Litor and Argan Argar and the Thunderbreath Restaurant, sometimes sought out by humans with a taste for the truly exotic.

Many trolls have abandoned their traditional ways, and these are the most likely to produce contenders for the rule of Adari; any human ruler of sense will have spies among them who can report signs of trouble.

Being ruler of Adari does not seem a bad position from the outside. The Pol Joni pay a rich tax to trade their livestock in Adari, as do the morokanth, other nomads may be browbeaten into paying for grazing rights, the merchants pay for the protection of the Market spell and the ruler's army, and

there are plenty of other ways to enrich oneself. But to stay in power for long requires a rarely attainable balance of diplomacy, brutality, generosity, and suspicion, and a following at once strong and unambitious. Power has changed hands frequently and violently; often Adari is controlled by a troll or nomad, but no group can keep a permanent lock on power.

The present ruler, Ofnili Bigsword, seems to have the town pretty well sewn up. He is that rare thing, a spoiled shaman: after nine years' apprenticeship among the Sables he absconded, spent two years with the Yelmialio cult but deserted that too, and wound up the leader of a Gagarth gang (Gagarth, the Wild Hunter, is the cult of outlaw nomads in Prax - see *Tales* 4).

He made good use of his followers and contacts to take over Adari, which he runs with two henchmen who have respectable fronts, Grobar the banker (and fence), and Margali, Sartarite owner of the biggest inn, the Travellers' Rest. The trolls like him, since he has agreed to some demands of theirs; the morokanth like him for admitting them to the market, though they carry little weight locally. The traders like him because he has reduced the tax they have to pay, even if he does not catch up with thieves so well, and all the craftworkers say that business has improved since he took over.

He is generous to the local cults, especially Issaries, whose High Priest is not disposed to take too harsh a view of him. He has good contacts with the local bandit gangs, whom he may tip off, or warn off, according to the wealth of caravans and the attitude of their leaders. The general opinion is that if anybody can oust Ofnili, they will need all his qualities, with a double dose of cunning and four times as much wealth. His policy is to bar entry to 'drifters' unless they evidently have some means, though he will

not stop them camping outside the stockade and coming in to trade. However, all entrants must pay a toll, which his guard officers will pitch as high as they think they can get away with (the normal rate throughout Dragon Pass is a Lunar a head, counting livestock as well as sentients, but they may well try for a Lunar a leg).

Parties who are admitted will be steered to the Travellers' Rest, and they and their possessions will come under intense scrutiny (Margali can deploy several Detect spells). Tough groups may simply be robbed, if it seems possible. An outcry will be followed by the arrest of some miserable local riffraff, but of course the goods are gone. Individuals may be waylaid at night, if incautious enough to wander about, or tempted into fights that will be anything but fair, and in such ways parties may be whittled to disappearing point. No locals will dare to warn strangers, since this is asking for trouble from Ofnili's enforcers, but they may get a tip-off from one of his followers if a connection or friendship is formed.

Ofnili's followers are a heterogeneous group, divided between the inherently vicious and the merely greedy; they include survivors of his old gang, deserters from the Lunar expeditions into Prax, stray nomads who are exiles or out for adventure and wealth-gathering, and wanderers from further afield who have hired on as mercenaries. Any who show signs of an inconvenient sense of honesty soon disappear or, if likely to be too tough to dispose of easily, are shown the gate and, as like as not, ambushed by Ofnili's bandit allies later. Such wanderers are the most likely to be persuaded into a generous act or even to leave Ofnili for a more charismatic leader.

Note that it is rare for important persons like Rune Lords to pass through, and these will be left strictly alone; if they start taking an unhealthy interest in the way



"I hate Adari. Everyone picks on me..."

things are run in Adari they may be tempted away with rumours of Chaos in the vicinity or something similar. Spies for the Lunar Empire are also left alone, if spotted as such; Ofnili has nothing to hide, having no ambition beyond making as much money as he can out of Adari. Any real sign of trouble will result in his swift departure with his most trustworthy followers, but this may only be temporary until he can judge the situation; he likes the place as well as any and might return with bandit allies if there seemed a good chance of regaining control.

So there you have it. Probably the safest place in Adari is outside the stockade, but your

players may feel tough enough to hack it. Few of Ofnili's followers would fight to the death for him, and his local allies are unlikely to make extraordinary efforts, so if players' feelings run that way a takeover or de-thronement would not be impossible. They could also be hired as spies by the Lunar government.

Next Issue:

The Skyreach Springs

Some Comments on Adari Market

* SINCE metal is scarce throughout Prax, any metal item bought in Adari should be priced using the rural price list in RQ3.

* LIVESTOCK and their products (hides, leather items especially) make up a considerable part of the merchandise in the market. These include herd men (typically bought by trolls for their dinner tables), horses, and mules; because of the Pol Joni presence, other Praxian nomads rarely sell their herd beasts, though hunters may bring in live animals or meat from the wild herds. The Pol Joni dominate horse trading, but are not allowed to offer prices below those of Ofnili. The domesticated insects of the trolls can also be bought. Riding or pack animals are sold with necessary trappings (e.g. saddles, saddlebags).

* ALMOST all the food eaten in Adari is brought in by traders, apart from the many forms of meat, and skullbush products (on which see RuneQuest Companion, p.32). Less usual items like fruit and herbs rank as great luxuries and cost accordingly. These and many other commodities of settled societies (e.g. woollen clothing, worked and unworked metal and wood, pottery, basketry, implements of all kinds) come almost entirely from Sartar/Tarsh or Pavis, as do most forms of alcohol worth drinking. There is a local hooch distilled from plants, which many appear to drink without ill effects, but there are rumours that it is more dangerous than most of the inhabitants.

TO SOR-EEL, Governor of Pavis, came in 1617 one Jaxarte Whyded, to take up a vacant junior position on his general staff. Though impoverished, Jaxarte's family was well connected, and through careful use of patronage had the young man placed in this bureaucratic position, which (on Jaxarte's own admission years later) was far beyond the ken of his experience or mettle. Apparently, Jaxarte had no liking for the work of an official; his consuming passion was architecture, particularly temple design. His later career attests he was in fact an architect of some ability, but in Prax he had no opportunity to exercise such talents.*

Compelled to do something with his unmotivated nephew, Sor-eel appointed Jaxarte "Commissioner of the Imperial Census for Prax". The Imperial Census had actually been carried out several years before. All Jaxarte was required to do was revise the existing figures, which Sor-Eel considered unreliable. Although officially the census had nothing to do with taxation, many of Sor-Eel's vassals viewed the youth's appointment with alarm, thinking that somehow the governor planned to revise the already high taxation levies. Jaxarte's job was made all the more difficult by such people, who wished to obfuscate and confound his researches.

Jaxarte was initially unhappy about being sent far from the comparative pleasures of Pavis, but as time progressed he took to his task with gusto and compiled extremely detailed reports. Jaxarte did not confine himself to the revision of the population figures: in a private journal he also wrote about his experiences and travels across Prax. Although some scholars consider most of his population estimates to be wildly inaccurate, his journal is still useful for its impressions of Prax under the Lunars.

The census occupied him for several years and, up until his removal from office (in the purge following the

*The unconventional design of the Yara Aranis temple in Mirin's Cross, built by Jaxarte in his middle years, was said by critics to have "captured the raw essence of the power of the desert wind", with its broad sweeping lines and glaring bulk. Several years after its completion it was extensively rebuilt back into a less original design by a more orthodox priest.

Jaxarte Whyded's "Grand Gazetteer of Prax"

by Michael O'Brien

Cradle affair of 1621) he entertained plans to publish his journal in a "Grand Gazetteer of Prax". Unfortunately, Jaxarte was forced to return to the Heartlands where he finally convinced his family to let him study architecture.

Jaxarte Whyded's writings were soon lost under a pile of administrative trivia in the Pavis Temple of Knowledge.

Floriat Fedora

Jaxarte's work languished in the Lhankor Mhy library for some years before they were discovered. They were later translated by Floriat Fedora, a young but well read junior sage.

She edited and later (in extreme old age) published selections of Jaxarte's writings as part of a *World Chronicle of the Third Age* (a popular genre of the period). The excerpt below is not from this pompous and derivative work, but from Floriat's original draft translation of Jaxarte's journal. The main text is unmistakably Jaxarte's; the occasional footnotes are Floriat's.

Sun County

This first selection describes Jaxarte's impressions of Sun County, the Yelmic territory south of Pavis. Although loath to venture out into the dangerous plains Jaxarte made Sun County one of the first places to begin his work. As will be seen, his naivety and political inexperience, coupled with Count Solanthos' fear he was coming to reassess the taxes, gave the youth an unpleasant introduction to the world

of diplomatic intrigue.

All Praise the Reaching Moon!

*Windsday-Disorder-Sea-7/46
(1617 S.T.)*

I, Jaxarte Whyded, commissioner of the Imperial Census, recount a journey taken through Sun County, there to gain audience with Count Solanthos Ironpike.

The Sun Folk's strong-lands begin across the ford at Garhound. To my shock, the commander of the escort suddenly announced he had orders not to proceed further. Evidently, a detachment of Yelmic hoplites was to greet me further on the opposite bank of the river. Sun Dome Templars, not Lunar legionnaires, were to convey me to my audience with Count Solanthos Ironpike, ruler of Sun County.

Although technically Lunar allies, the people of Sun County have always exhibited a staunch independence, and Uncle (1) did not want to unnecessarily antagonise them by marching occupation troops through their land. I concurred, and allowed my escort to return to the city.

Garhound

Garhound is a squalid town of 366 souls and is typical of those along the river valley. Its only building of note (the home of the Garhound family) is of unspectacular design.

Despite my credentials these country



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hicks refused to receive me, claiming they had not been informed of my arrival by "his excellency" the Governor. I was therefore compelled to quarter in the verminous stockade along with the common soldiers (2). In the meantime, my driver set about changing the axles of my gig so they would fit the wheel ruts of Sun County - a tedious but necessary task (3). Several days later, my Yelmic escort appeared on the opposite side of the river.

Having heard so much of the discipline, precision of the Sun Dome Templars, I was shocked to see the dirty, uncouth squad of louts sent to fetch me (4). Their leader, a pimply lad scarcely older than his followers, explained that they were not templars, but "Yelmic Militia" - farmers sons for the most part - doing their annual cult service. The militia leader even had the audacity a gold wheel "entry impost", which I flatly refused to pay. He continued to press for payment, until I threatened to expose this graft to his commander.

Sun County

Sun County is flat and monotonous. The farmers are obliged to sow four-fifths of their holdings with barley. The temple takes one-third of the barley harvest as tax. The other one-fifth of their plots the farmers may use as they please: crops include hops, grapes, rye and wheat. It is said that deep in the fields some farmers illicitly grow the banned narcotic **Hazia**, though I saw no sign (5). Illegal stills are also said to be hidden amongst the villages, for the Yelmialio cult controls all brewing in the County. Date palms line the sides of the road, but the cult also enjoys a strict monopoly on their produce. The land is skilfully irrigated, and all farmers are expected to give a portion of their time to maintain the channels.

Division of the land into farming plots is very rigid, and such plots are rectangular. The annual fertility spell of the Sun Dome temple affects the crops of these temple lands. Farmers inherit special white stones marked with fertility runes to signify that their plot is part of the lands (6). The Yelmalian fertility ritual calls for the

stones to remain in place all year, or the spell will be broken for that particular farm.

Lately a rumour about a great treasure under one of these rocks has been spread across the County. The farmers take a grim view of treasure seekers disturbing their stones, though they themselves often give into temptation and peek underneath. This has brought about an agricultural disaster. Severe punishments have been decreed for those caught overturning the stones, but still food production remains badly affected (7).

The people of Sun County themselves are plain by Pelorian standards, with blond hair and dark eyes. Men typically go about with long beards, but women are expected to cover their faces modestly when in the presence of strangers (8). They speak an unusual dialect, a mixture of several tongues, but refrain from discourse with outsiders. Although their leaders deign not to trade in the silver coin of the Empire (preferring gold), but the common folk willingly enough accept the silver Imperial. The Lokarnos wagon-cult controls all trade and portage in the County, save that which goes by river.

The Sun Dome Temple

In an otherwise uninteresting region, the Sun Dome temple itself comes as a pleasant surprise. The temple complex is an imposing series of buildings, executed in the severe, formal style of Dara Happa (9), yet is here, deep in the desert! From some distance one can see the great Sun Dome of the temple, a gilded half-sphere that almost blinds the viewer with its reflected radiance. Beside the temple proper is a small town, usually referred to as "The Yard". To my disappointment I found The Yard to be scarcely different to any other town in the valley, though I admit the streets were wider and cleaner. Approximately 1,000 souls live here, many of whom work directly for the temple.

Count Solanthos Ironpike

After a nights rest in one of the temples guest houses, I was roused from my bed at dawn and instructed

to dress for my audience with the Count. As I prepared to enter the temple complex one of the splendidly-attired guards suddenly ripped my crimson cloak off my back and threw it on the ground! I went to retrieve it, but despite my protests I was hustled on (10).

Unlike its outward magnificence, the interior of the Sun Dome temple is a confusing array of cloisters and corridors. I finally found myself in the temple's council chambers, a majestic gilded room, lined with scrolls dating to antiquity. There, before me on a simple yet commanding throne sat Count Solanthos Ironpike, ruler of Sun County.

Once a duellist of some distinction, yet now in middle age tending to corpulence, Count Solanthos wears a thick black beard, although his receding hair is quite blond (11). When I arrived the Count was apparently conducting a trial: the two defendants before him had been arrested some hours earlier on the charge of "fornication" (12). Despite their impassioned pleas for mercy the Count curtly cut the pair short, stating he had fulfilled his legal obligations to them and was now ready to pass sentence. The man he ordered to be blinded and imprisoned for life; the woman was to be taken out immediately and strangled (13). All of this for mere "fornication"! (14)

The malefactors dispensed with, Count Solanthos was ready for me. I presented him with my credentials and began a skilfully composed panegyric lauding the close links the Empire enjoyed with Sun County. Unimpressed with my oratory, the Count peremptorily silenced me and bade me come to the point. Taken aback, I requested from him the necessary data I required to update the census. The Count gruffly replied that such information could have easily been sent by routine courier, and why had Sor-Eel sent a spy! I began to protest my innocence of such a charge, but the Count dismissed me imperiously. Instead, he gestured to a liveried attendant who handed me a gilded scroll. "This should satisfy your master, boy!", the Count sneered. What could I do but thank him and withdraw gracefully? Taking his hint, I made immediate plans to return to Pavis.

Uncle burst into peals of laughter when I showed him these documents, remarking that the Count had a fine gift for fiction. He casually tossed the scroll away, and told me that I could gain a truthful account of Sun County's population figures in last years Lunar tax records (15). As I left the governors office, my head fogged with the intricacies of high politics, I wondered if my apparently futile trip to Sun County had some deep political purpose I was not as yet privy to?(16)

Floriat's Notes

- (1) Sor-Eel: Jaxarte was the third son of Sor-Eel's elder half-sister Euridice.
- (2) One wonders why Jaxarte did not stay at the local inn?
- (3) What could be a better illustration of the insular and aloof nature of Sun dome society than their roads!
- (4) Obviously a calculated insult. Perhaps Sor-Eel's sending of the 17-year-old Jaxarte as a Lunar emissary was also a calculated insult?
- (5) Hazia is a euphoric substance derived from the crushed stamens of a plant native to the Stinking Forest. Hazia is highly addictive, producing in the mind of the taker an effect not unlike Discorporation. It is usually smoked or snorted, but some species, particularly trolls, like to eat it. Dwarves are said to take Hazia by anal suppository, but I will not go into details here! Hazia is cultivated illegally in plots deep in the barley fields of Sun County, though the authorities there officially deny it. Pavis serves as the distribution point for Prax, Sartar and the Lunar Empire beyond. A pipe of Hazia comes wrapped in a small package of leaves from the Hazia plant, alternatively, the Hazia may be rolled up in the leaves and smoked. An addict might smoke up to 20 pipes per day, if he can afford it. On the streets of New Pavis the slang word for Hazia is "Dope".
- (6) Thus, the purchase of a farm is often colloquially called "getting a rock".
- (7) Count Solanthos arrived at a novel solution to this problem: he issued a decree that the "great treasure" had been found, and displayed

a fine golden cup at the markets of the County for the next season. He also publicly whipped several "rumour mongers".

(8) The mere sight of a woman's elbow or thigh is considered a scandalous outrage by the pious: a significant erotic event by the irreverent.

(9) Here Jaxarte's incomplete knowledge of architecture is obvious. The "Dara Happan" style which he enthuses about is admittedly "formal and severe", yet place a much greater emphasis on symmetry than is evident in Sun County.

(10) Jaxarte had the lack of political tact to attempt entering a Yelmatio temple wearing red, the colour of Fire, the lost power.

(11) Count Solanthos does in fact have naturally black hair, unlike most of his subjects who tend to be blondes. A man of tremendous vanity, the Count obtained permission from the priests to dye his hair the lighter shade. He was forbidden to do the same to his beard on the grounds that this would constitute "disguising himself as a woman", something a good Yelmalian male must never do. Curiously, it is all right for a Yelmalian woman to disguise herself as a man!

(12) Court transcripts record that the man and woman had in fact been married, but, following cult dictates were forced to divorce each other five years after the man became a priest. Unable to curb his passions for her, the man had taken to visiting his former wife and was informed upon by a neighbour. It is unusual that the Count chose so early in the morning to judge a capital crime. Such offenses are usually heard in the noon hour. "full under the impartial and just light of Yelm." Jaxarte's presence at the trial was most probably intentional, as another form of intimidation.

(13) It has been said of the Count that he loved the correct forms of legality almost as much as he despised the concept of justice.

(14) The Count's severe attitude towards sexual and moral offenses may be a symptom of the restrictive geas Yelmatio compels him to follow.

(15) The count obviously thought Jaxarte had been sent to investigate the revenue potential of the County, which had not been reassessed since the conquest. Count Solanthos therefore furnished him with bogus figures, which deliberately under-estimated the County's population (and thus tax liability). To Jaxarte's credit his thorough examination of the previous years tax records enabled him to come to a

fairly accurate population figure for his census. I quote from his report:

"Urban Sun County...1,058 souls: includes temple staff, garrison and craftsmen. Extensive ironsmithing/goldworking shop.

"Eiskolli...414 souls. Population swells to over 700 in late dark season, when the local tannery reached maximum output.

"Helmbold...556 souls: excluding river-folk. Major source of flax in Sun County. Has resident ironsmith.

"Harpoon...144 souls. This village is remarkable only for the large machine housed there, used to kill sea monsters.

"Morning, Cornspot, Arrowsands, Dawn, Shallow Corner, Flatvale, Yellowrock, Queenscliff and Daybreak are all small settlements with populations between 68 and 209 souls.

"The village of Sandy Lot has been renamed "Repentance" for a year-and-a-day by order of the Count, as punishment for failing to pay its annual cult remittances.

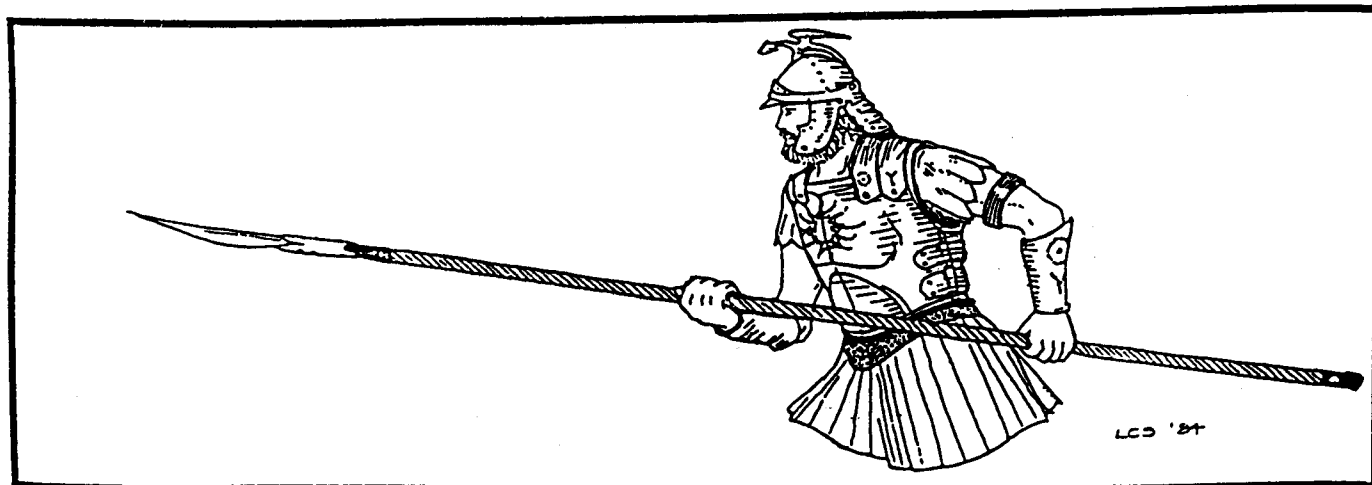
"Since the last census, the village of Goldwater has been decimated by swamp fever and most of the population have moved to other parts of the County.

"Rabbit Hat village was sacked and burned by unknown nomads late last year and its inhabitants were carried off.

"Rural farmers...13,913 souls.

"TOTAL POPULATION OF SUN COUNTY, IMPERIAL PROVINCE OF PRAX: 17,338 souls."

(16) I have already proposed that Sor-Eel's motive for sending the inexperienced junior bureaucrat as his emissary was to subtly insult the Count and his haughty pretensions. Then again, perhaps Sor-Eel was simply being ingenious, though this is certainly not one of the governors apparent traits.



The Cult of Geo

by Greg Stafford

GEO WAS one of the friends who accompanied Sartar as early as his entry into Dragon Pass. Tales say that he was Sartar's cook and ale-brewer. Like several of Sartar's other early companions, Geo was influential in aiding the king to establish himself in his future kingdom. After Sartar was apotheosized as the spirit of the nation several of his friends also found immortality and worship as spirits of minor cults. Geo was one, who founded a hospitality cult sometimes called "Geo's Salvation Army."

Sartar lived in Dragon Pass between the years 1407-1520. During this period were the Telmore Wars, and Sartar was influential in establishing that werewolf-worshipping tribe in Dragon Pass. One Sartar tribe, called the Sanchali, was badly mauled by the invaders before being rescued by Sartar, but according to the peace settlement the few remaining refugees were bereft of their old lands and left without a home.

Geo offered them refuge, and received from his leader the permission to house them in other tribes' property, especially the newly-founded cities. The tribe accepted, thus maintaining a meagre tribal identity. Afterwards the members of Geo's cult were sometimes called Sanchali, and the best

cooks and brewers among them could trace a lineage to the original tribe. Geo himself wed a widow of the tribe.

The first Geo's was Geo's Ridge Inn, located at the northern edge of the Quivin Hills, just south of Jonstown. During his life he opened other inns in each of the cities founded by Sartar (Wilms Church, Swenstown, Jonstown, and Boldhome), and these inns: Geo's Always Open Inn, Geo's Last Stop Inn, Geo's Creek Inn and Geo's at Runegate. Since we are unsure of the exact date of his death and/or apotheosis we cannot be sure if he personally opened the other inns in body or just in spirit. These include Geo's Cave Inn, Geo's Duck Inn, Geo's River Inn (in Dragonewt territory), and Geo's Horsing Around Inn (in Queens Post, Grazelands). It is fairly certain that Geo's Shaker Inn and others in the former Tarsh territories were established during the reigns of other Kings or princes of Sartar. These include the two at Alda-chur and Alone, and Geo's Outer Inn. Geo's at Pavis certainly was founded after his life as well. There also several in the Holy Country. Finally, no one who has not been there is sure of the location or origin of Geo's Hideaway Inn.

There may be some frivolity in the naming of some of these places, and occasional joviality or ribaldry

may occur within their walls. Occasional warriors and many visitors are offended or curious about this. But there is often little else for an adventurer to laugh at, and maybe nowhere else where he could relax enough to enjoy humour at all. Geo's provides the place and source.

Membership is open to any citizen of Sartar, or close friends. The bulk of membership is made up of adventurers, outlaws, and other wanderers. It also attracts drunkards, sluggards, and ne'er do wells who see it as a place of easy (if meagre) comfort. But these latter types are inevitably captured by the air of adventure which lies thick in the inns, and cured of their laziness or ill habits so that they will eagerly join an expedition.

Caretakers of the inns are veterans who took too many wounds, got brain damage, or were otherwise forced to retire before they reached independence or death. Veterans incapable of adventure or war happily sweep the floors, change sleeping straw, cook, and brew ale for their healthier companions. The inns are a terrific source for gossip and tales, or hints about possible treasures lost, not found, or otherwise hinted at.

Benefits of the cult are those which the far-from-home most need: a safe bed, friends, and a warm meal. The cult will guarantee its members *at least* a bowl of porridge and tankard of ale and bed in the hay, any time they go to any Geo's. There is sometimes healing to be found there, or at least a change of bandages and some surgery if necessary. These are minimums, though, and the inns usually are able to offer more to their members.

This is paid for by several means, but NOT by dues from its members. Geo founded the place to take care of those temporarily incapable of paying for their own provender. As indicated below, members are members for life, and a part of the pledge says "His own take care of Geo." The people who manage to become chieftains, merchants, or ranking cult members

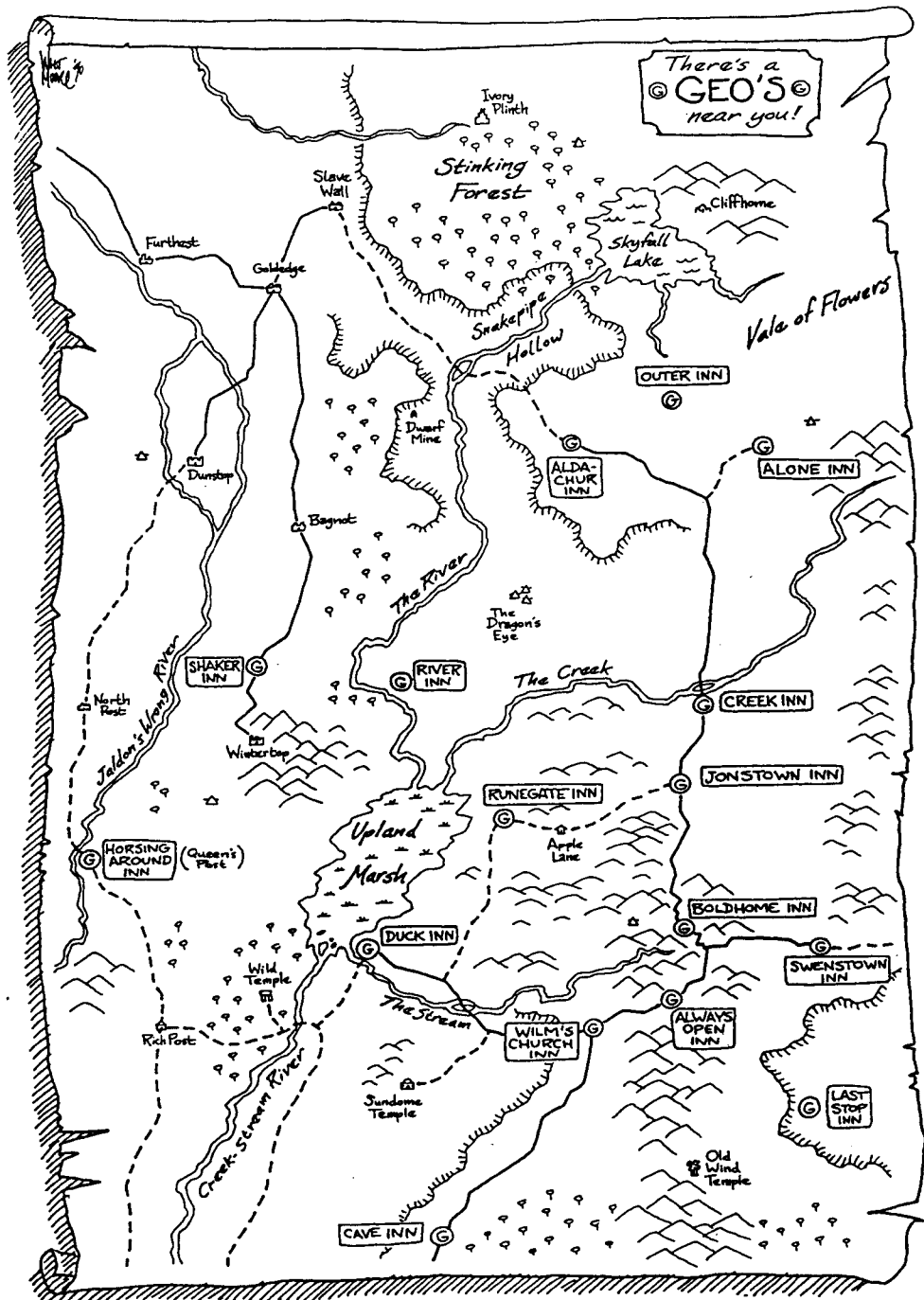
should recall who gave them shelter when they were down and out. If they do not they are visited by dreams, first, cult members later, and finally by Geo's Bouncer. Thus there is an irregular but somewhat reliable stream of donations which arrive at the inns to raise the quality of the free meal and free drink for members. The Sartar royal house traditionally supplied ale-making supplies.

Additional income is generated from paying, non-member customers who stay the night. Geo's will usually extend this to friends of friends, but no paying customer will receive a crust of bread until all members have received their share, and only then if it can be spared and handsomely paid for. Members can join if they pass the entrance requirement of being a Sartar citizen, or a close friend of a citizen, and if they swear to uphold the rules of the cult. These rules are that members must always respect the hospitality of Geo, and never fight among themselves or allow others to fight inside the inn; when members meet and know or notice that they are members they must stop whatever they are doing and "have a round for Geo," even though this may be a short sip of water upon a savage battlefield; they must occasionally stand guard duty or perform other tasks in the inn; and they must never forget who offered them refuge in their time of need.

Once these things are sworn to then a member receives a brand on his right little finger. Showing this scar will get him automatic entry past the porters of any Geo's thereafter. The porters can instantly recognize a forged brand.

Enforcement of the cult regulations lies upon its members who are present. If this is not sufficient, or if some crime is perpetrated which other members may not know about, then the matter is left up to Geo's Bouncer. The original identity of this person is unknown, but the reality of his presence and power is well established.

Geo's Bouncer can be seen anyplace in the kingdom, and cannot be mistaken. He rides upon a two-



wheeled oxcart drawn by a huge black ox. Upon the cart is a hanging gallows with several nooses, a beheading block and basket, and an all-iron box which is never opened. The Bouncer is bare-armed, but otherwise covered with black leather. His unblinking eyes stare out of an executioner's hood. He carries an immense iron and silver double-bitted axe. He never eats, but lives by drinking blood from the ox. He speaks only to Geo's members, either a gruff friendly greeting to offer a drink of his bulls blood, or to state their crime while he trusses or otherwise prepares them for execution. (It is not offensive to

refuse someone else's drink, but the refuser must supply his own.) Although apolitical in nature the cult has always been closely associated with the house of Sartar. In my campaign which takes place in 1611, only nine years after the sack of Boldhome, the cult is rather poor but very popular among the conquered Sartarites. Lunar citizens and friends are expelled from the cult, never allowed inside the inn walls, and distrusted by all cult members. Lunar authorities believe it to be a den of sedition, but generally leave it alone as a sop to the conquered nation. It is also rumoured that the empire fears Geo's Bouncer.

Ancestor Quest

by Jon Quaife

THIS adventure can be run any place in Glorantha where ancestors are worshipped. It works best in places where local society is clan based, with little or no central authority. At least one player-character should come from the clan concerned.

An ideal character mix would be eight or nine characters of medium to poor skill, or a lesser number of tougher Player Characters (PC's).

Suitable clans can be found all across Prax and in the more primitive regions of the Barbarian Belt, in Fronela and Ralios, much of Maniria, and parts of Kralorela.

The Plot

The clan has been troubled recently by brood and pestilence, and many families have gathered together in a single place at the behest of the chief shaman Laughing Stag. In a great ceremony, Old Man Longfinger is possessed by a clan ancestor named Vrang Killer-of-Chaos, who accompanies the warriors to battle the chaos enemy.

In fighting his quarry Vrang Killer-of-Chaos invokes an ancient power called *The Six Beads of Vanquished Spirit*, which throws all concerned into a magical maelstrom.

The best time to run this adventure is in the week before the Sacred Time. At its end the Sacred Time will have mysteriously passed.

The Ritual

All of the clan families who have attended Laughing Stag's summons will be gathered here to meet and seek aid from the ancestors. Depending on the capacity and wealth of the clan, a couple of less important shamans may also be present.

The intention is to call the ancestors and seek their strength and guidance against the chaos foe. This help can take many forms; trading spells, simple

advice from clan members killed by the chaos foe, or perhaps using the special spells from the ancestor cult such as *Incarnate Ancestor*. For general information on Ancestor worship see *Gods of Glorantha*.

Elements of the Ritual

The following section describes in order of occurrence the elements which are important to the ritual. Ritual spells or ceremonies usually involve this sort of thing, varying greatly according to culture.

Enchantments such as *Armouring Enchantment* might not require a huge ceremony, but could involve, for example for a sword or metal item, re-tempering and quenching in an unusual agent such as blood or sacred water.

during its course will provide enlightenment to the clan regarding the pestilence as well as individual revelations. The dance also reasserts the victory of the order of Life and Death over the disorder of Chaos.

Laughing Stag leads the dance. His costume represents Ancestor (Daka Fal), and is simply highly decorative traditional dress, with a mask which emphasises division between death and life.

The tribesmen and trickster (Old Man Longfinger) dance behind Laughing Stag. They represent the living and dead people ruled by Ancestor. Most will be lightly dressed with a decorative emblem representing either life or death. Trickster can never be relied on, he is often intoxicated and uncontrollable. Some participants attain



The Dance

This proceeds throughout the ritual. The dance represents the dilemma. Various events and visions which occur

a trance-like state or are possessed by benevolent ancestors before the completion of the ritual. Such visions and memories from the ancestors will provide insights for the clan as a whole

as well as individuals.

Enemy's role is adopted by another shaman. For this dance Enemy is multiple, so most of the apprentice shamans adopt this role too. In this dance Enemy is vile chaos and so all participants wear headdresses with long strands which represent tentacles and similar horrible appendages. Some may also wear masks or other symbolic tokens.

Participants may inhale intoxicants throughout this ritual. These narrow the gap between the worlds, strengthening the bond with the ancestors.

Axis Mundi

Laughing Stag will cast this spell during the ritual. Components are employed with the spell, and for the most powerful shamans and ancestors, are sometimes magical themselves.

such components used by Laughing Stag might include a ritual spear with tokens and parts (skulls, hand bones, and so on) of the ancestors attached, a bowl of burning herbs to ward off malign spirits, and old and sacred skin of a terrible but vanquished beast which shows Laughing Stag's status and power.

Other clan members will play drums; these usually go into a trance. The drum sounds resonate on the spirit plane, audible to the ancestors.

The Ancestors Dance

Once the *Axis Mundi* spell has been cast the ancestors will join the dance. At first they will be hardly noticeable in proportion to the numbers of the participating clan members, but soon so many will have joined that their presence is clearly perceptible.

Some ancestors join the dance on the side of Laughing Stag (Friendly), some dance among the figures representative of Enemy (Malign), and some mill around with no specific alignment (Neutral). This time offers the gathered worshippers a chance to learn and give magic from or to their ancestors.

Malign spirits might try to take possession of one of Laughing Stag's allies, although they must defeat Laughing Stag himself. The looming spectacle of his mighty fetch is enough to scare them off, however.

Two individuals are possessed during the ritual. The first is the shaman representative of Enemy (a voluntary incarnation), and the second is Old Man Longfinger (an involuntary possession occurring at Laughing Stag's command).

Enemy Speaks

By the time Enemy shaman has been possessed the ritual will have achieved a crescendo. Enemy shaman will literally attack some members of Laughing Stag's retinue, perhaps even wounding or maiming with his spear. As he does so he speaks with the voice of an old woman. Most of his utterances are incomprehensible, although Laughing Stag understands them.

Vrang Killer-of-Chaos

Old Man Longfinger is the next to act, charging forward despite his ungainly stupor, and shouting in an unruly, very masculine voice (nothing like Old Man Finger at all). His words are also incomprehensible, but he grabs a spear and strikes down the Enemy shaman with it. He then flees the ritual. When Enemy is struck down all the Malign ancestors leave the *Axis Mundi* region, and his followers feign death.

Ending the Dance

At this stage of the ritual the old order has reasserted itself; order has triumphed over chaos. The dance will end soon after. Many of the Enemy dancers will stumble out of the zone of the *Axis Mundi*, or be carried out by relatives waiting on the outside.

Laughing Stag will stand triumphant, carrying the torn out heart of a beast sacrificed to the ancestors in thanksgiving for their assistance. The *Axis Mundi* will expire, the ancestors will depart, and the sacrificial animal will be eaten by the clan in a feast held in the name of the ancestors. The drumming continues throughout.

Player Character Use of the Ritual

PC clanmembers will worship their ancestors (since the whole clan does so) and so gain the opportunity to participate in and benefit from the *Axis*

Mundi spell.

Encourage them to seek out spirits in the dance, and make use of spells such as *Spirit Guardian*, *Gift Power*, or *Gift Spell*, in order to learn Spirit or Divine Magic from an ancestor, or perhaps seek or experience a vision.

Council of War

That night Laughing Stag and the war chief call a council of war. All able-bodied men attend, and Old Man Longfinger (gnawing a spear haft), as well as any PC's who are not tribesmen.

The council has been called in order to establish what was learned from the ritual, and decide how to deal with the chaos pestilence. Because it is so near Sacred Time everybody expects something special to have occurred.

The war chief invokes a god of war (such as Storm Bull, Mother Bear, or a local spirit) to watch over the proceedings. He waits for any challengers to his position to come forward (none do), and then asks Laughing Stag what the ancestors have told him.

Spirit's Wisdom

Laughing Stag comes forward and introduces himself:

"I am Laughing Stag, Keeper of the Fingerbones of Command, handed down to me by Short-Lance my father, and Raging Storm, Knower of Secrets before him. The spirits know my name, and I share and pass some of their wisdom. Marda Eightbosom is my companion, and my Death walks beside me to warn me of danger. You all saw my magic and danced the ancestor dance, who doubts the might of the ancestors?"

None challenge Laughing Stag. He then turns to another clansman and asks him to speak. The man, whose name is Arrow Whistles will stand and relate his experiences concerning the pestilence. The council thus begins.

Sources of information

The council has a number of sources of information.

Scouts

Firstly there are reports made by mundane interaction with the foe, by those who have suffered from disease or robbery at the hands of the foe, and from those who have trailed them.

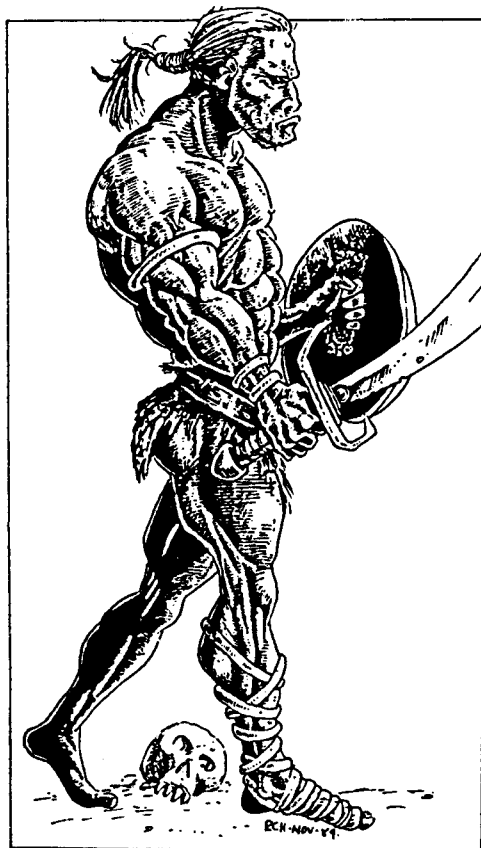
Arrow Whistles account is one of these giving sound tactical information about the foe (especially the harpy), and mentioning that they were travelling to the Rocky Country, an area of broken terrain and caves.

Visions

Secondly there are visions experienced by some participants as their souls wandered during the ritual. These provide insights to the individual, the clan or both.

For example Hunts Rabbits, a drummer, had a vision in which he saw a familiar lair called Old Bear's Cave, in the Rocky Country. However, when he went into the cave it contained only dried herd beasts tails instead of the familiar animal signs. He may relate this when Arrow Whistles mentions the Rocky Country.

Other visions include (seen by an apprentice representing Enemy) a huge ugly lady, wearing a white blood-stained tunic, and wielding a meat cleaver made of bone. In front of her stood many evil ancestors. Or (seen by a



clanswoman) a jackal fighting a snake which changed shape. The Jackal kept its grip, and when it killed the snake the sun rose.

What the Ancestors Said

Thirdly, there are personal accounts rendered by the ancestors of some clanmembers. This intercourse may have occurred simply to educate the recipient, or incidentally as a result of other forms of interchange.

One warrior, by the name of Tries Too Hard, used the spell *Spirit Guardian* during the ritual. The spirit which he has gained is an ancestor known as Croaks Like A Vulture, whose allegiance many regard as suspect. Tries Too Hard says that Croaks knows the foe and is eager to set off and kill the enemy before his *Spirit Guardian* spell runs out.

Other ancestors will advise caution, or tell the clan what precautions should be undertaken by the warriors chosen to fight the chaos.

Such precautions might be, for example, to drink only the milk of - insert appropriate animal (not goat!) - until the foe is vanquished. At your option this may give the warriors a small magical advantage, such as increasing their Fatigue total by ten points for the duration of the adventure.

Old Man Longfinger and Enemy

Finally there are the possessions of the shaman who represented Enemy and Old Man Longfinger. Although most people saw their actions during the dance only Laughing Stag can interpret them. He says:

"All that has been seen and heard today is of great importance to us because this morning Old Lady Bloody-Hag came among us. She was here and she has been seen in vision. Unless we destroy her our souls will burn and our animals will die, there will be bad hunting and mother earth will dry up, for she has vowed this.

"Old Lady Bloody-Hag is in the Place of Six Chambers, for this has been seen. I do not know where this place will be found but we must send warriors to find it and destroy her. To do this

Grandfather Finds Honey has told me to perform the Task of Good Choosing and given me the magic to do it.

"Trickster will accompany those chosen by the Ancestors, for a spirit with strange magic holds him. I do not know whether this is good or bad but the spirit is ancient and I think it will do no harm."

The war chief stands and permits Laughing Stag to perform the Task of Good Choosing.

The Task of Good Choosing

This is a simple enough ritual. Laughing Stag carries with him a leather satchel which contains a mixture of beads, stones and knucklebones. Each member present must take an item out of the bag. Naturally, the characters are unable to see in the bag.

Some of the items are marked with runes. Any character drawing an item marked with a rune has been chosen by the Spirits to rid the clan of the chaos trouble.

Of course all the PC's will draw items with runes on. This is not a random process; any character who thinks it is foolish for doubting the wisdom of the spirits. As well as all the PC's Old Man Longfinger draws a marked item, as do as many NPC's as you require for the adventure (you should consider Tries Too Hard as a potential candidate).

The Shaman's Gifts

When the Task of good Choosing is complete the war chief acknowledges the choice of the spirits. He offers the selected characters the services of the clans medicine men. Laughing Stag will also offer the chosen characters gifts proscribed by the ancestors. Roll on the following table to see what token the character drew in the Task of Good Choosing and the appropriate gift:

1D10 Marked Item; Gift

1[Drawn item] A pebble with a painted man rune; [Gift] a small red stone which will knock a creature unconscious if his armour is penetrated. It will work once and then crumble to dust.

2-6 An ancestors knucklebone with a Water rune painted upon it; a flask

of dew water collected from magical place. A mouthful cures total hit point loss from poison or blood loss. There are two mouthfuls in the flask, if more than one character drew a knucklebone from the bag then this is shared.

7-9 A bead with an enamelled Earth rune on it; a single dose of red war paint which acts as Protection 3 for a day.

10 A piece of wood with a Magic rune scratched on it; a single herb which if chewed makes the individual incapable of any offensive action for POT-CON rounds if his CON is overcome by the POT of 20. If the herb is burned and the smoke inhaled double the effective POT.

These gifts should be returned to Laughing Stag once the adventure is complete, whether used or not. Additionally the clans women will provide the characters with two Heal 4 matrices (made from a culturally appropriate item). These are enchanted with the condition that they may only be used with the willing permission of the clan's women.

The Six Beads of Vanquished Spirit

Old Man Longfinger

The spirit in dominant possession of Old Man Longfinger is a spirit from before Time called Vrang Killer-of-Chaos. His presence here is because he is bound by ancient constraints to be the adversary of Old Lady Bloody-Hag, an evil spirit whom the broos have called forth, and who has led them here to harm the clan.

As Vrang, Old Man Longfinger is uncommunicative although he does offer the occasional guttural statement. This is all he knows in the modern language of the clan. As Old Man Longfinger, he is a useless bum, good for nothing except in his traditional role as scapegoat.

Defeating Old Lady Bloody-Hag

By invoking the *Six Beads of Vanquished Spirit* Vrang Killer-of-Chaos sets in motion the old Godtime sequence of his part in the struggle against Chaos, culminating in *I Fought We Won*. The sequence of stability -

harmony - change - darkness - disorder - chaos, also represents the order of the Gods Age and Greater Darkness.

Defeating Old Lady Bloody-Hag is a portion of *I Fought We Won*, and its recurrence at this time is a part of the process which, during the Sacred Time, re-asserts the new order of Time and slows the encroachment of chaos.

Failure in this task weakens the reality of Glorantha and so brings chaos and disorder nearer, a symptom prominent as the Hero Wars draw nearer.

The Nature of Chaos

Chaos can generally be said to influence individuals in two ways, through *chaos taints*, and *chaos features*.

Chaos Taints

Chaos taints are generally racial in origin. All broo and scorpion men are born tainted with chaos. A chaos taint can never be got rid of, although a handful of myths describe individuals who have achieved this.

Turning into a broo through the Primal Chaos ritual of *Chaos Feature*, or being born a scorpion man through the Bagog cult's *Ritual of Rebirth* ceremony both gain the unfortunate individual a chaos taint.

Chaos Features

Races with chaos taints always have a chance of having chaos features at birth. Otherwise they can be obtained permanently through the Primal Chaos *Chaos Feature* ritual, or temporarily through the *Reverse Chaos* spell made available by Thed.

If any chaos feature is gained involuntarily some deities would be willing to remove it through Divine Intervention.

Winning

Old Lady Bloody-Hag must be banished so that she cannot return again next year. To achieve this it is necessary to destroy the broo shaman Kotchitaz and to banish Old Lady Bloody-Hag's physical form if she manifests on the Mundane Plane. Only the PC's will be able to achieve this

latter task since Vrang lacks the magic enabling him to do this.

The Six Chambers

The Rocky Country

The chaos foe were last seen heading towards the Rocky Country, so this is where the party should head now.

The first the characters will see of their opponents is spotting the harpy circling above a prominent point not too far away. This requires a Scan roll to see.

The characters should then head to this point, at which stage you should give them the opportunity to try Track rolls to pick up on the track of the foe and trace them to the first chamber.

If they fail to see either the tracks or the harpy continue to repeat the procedure until they do.

The harpy in her scouting roll will have seen the PC's, and the broo gang lie in wait.

The Place of Six Chambers

Even though the caverns are familiar to the PC's in this quest each of the six chambers represents a portion of Godtime (stability; harmony; change; disorder; darkness; chaos). The themes affect the battle in certain ways as the sequence is travelled through. For the PC's the fight gets harder as the adventure continues.

Make up your own maps for the chambers. The characters are likely to be familiar with the first few chambers but thereafter they are on magical terrain.

The First Chamber; The Chamber of Stability

Overview

This cavern will be familiar to PC clansmen, but the atmosphere is different. A musty smell hangs in the air like nothing has changed for thousands of years except for a very recent disturbance (the broo gang). Dust lies thickly about and if a river flows through the cavern normally it now sits idly but not stagnant. The cavern is totally quiet, except for the waiting foes.

Effects on Game Mechanics

Change is difficult to achieve here, light sources do not flicker. Add 50% to any rolls which encourage change (to hit, cast spells and so on), or subtract 50% from those in favour of stability (such as to remain standing from a knockback or to resist a spell). All damage is halved and critical, special and fumble results cannot occur.

Any chaotics who enter the chamber must make POWx3% rolls or become demoralised as per the Spirit Magic spell.

Kotchitaz's Tactics

Even though Old Lady Bloody-Hag has been mumbling about this place being bad Kotchitaz will set up an ambush in here, although broos one, two and three have been sent into chamber two. The idea is for all the chaos folk to let fly with missile weapons and then flee into the next chamber where the waiting broo can cover them.

Kotchitaz himself will be out of sight near the exit to chamber two, with broo five, who will shoot a couple of arrows that Old Lady Bloody-Hag will have attempted to Speedart. She will not try very hard however.

Kotchitaz's problem is that he hasn't anticipated the demoralising effect of the chamber. When the attack begins check for demoralisation. Those that fail will not attack and will withdraw to the next chamber earlier than expected. Hoggorad the Harpy will flee out of the complex altogether if demoralised. If she is not demoralised she is likely to remain hidden and not enter chamber two in any case.

Note that for the demoralisation roll Kotchitaz gets to include his fetch's POW; Old Lady Bloody-Hag will not be demoralised.

The Second Chamber; The Chamber of Harmony

Overview

The second chamber seems much cleaner and brighter than normal (double all radii for illumination). any river flowing through the chamber makes a quiet and pleasant bubbling sound, even if it normally booms

through like the Niagra Falls! At one place in the chamber there is a spring gushing from the wall where normally there is no such thing, and a huge grape vine hangs down with pure water dribbling over it.

The spring flows over a stone table (also an unfamiliar feature) about which sit an elf, a dwarf, a pretty woman with flowers in her hair, and a dragonewt. All drink from copper goblets and eat grapes. The goblets never drain dry, and the grapes regrow immediately upon being picked.

Effects on Game Mechanics

The feast cannot be interacted with in any way, and so it is best to place it and the spring in an inaccessible place. Spirits cannot see the feast even when manifest on the mundane plane, and spells will always fail against it or the participants.

Any chaotics who enter the chamber must make POWx4% rolls or become demoralised as per the spirit magic spell. Rolls to cast spirit and divine magic are automatically successful in this chamber.

Kotchitaz's Tactics

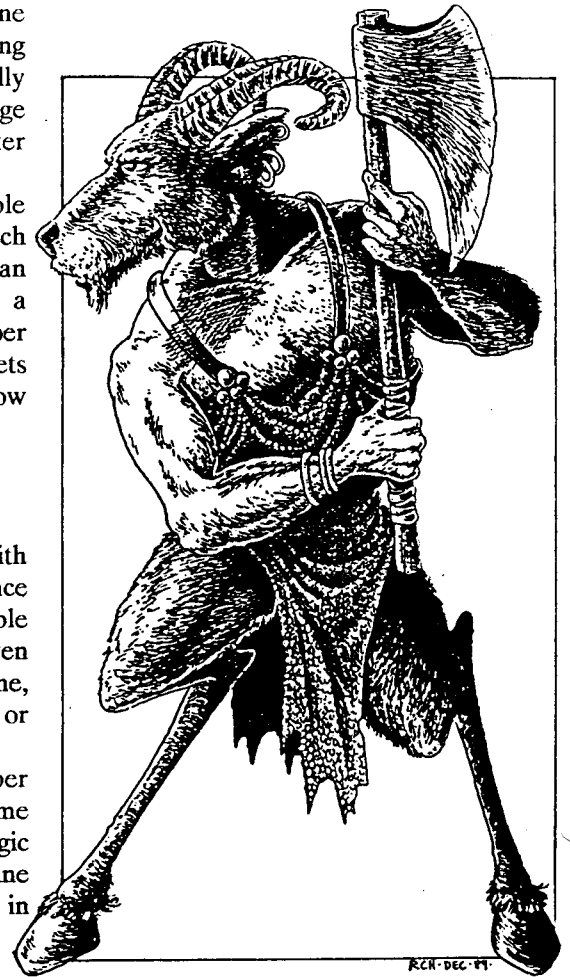
Check for the demoralisation effect on Kotchitaz's band as they enter the chamber, excepting broos one, two and three who lie in wait for the PC's and check when Kotchitaz signals them to attack. Those that fail will run straight through to chamber three.

With the remainder Kotchitaz will try and attack in a similar manner to the chamber before, using missile weapons to hold them off. If the PC's suffer badly from the missiles Kotchitaz may commit some of his band (including the scorpion man) to a melee here.

The Third Chamber; The Chamber of Change

Overview

This chamber is very large and a breeze blows around inside it. Unlike the other chambers illumination is provided by many torches on the walls which cast flickering shadows. These torches can be removed,



Effect on Game Mechanics

Subtract 10% from all successful die rolls and add 10% to all failures. Vrang gets to summon one Spirit of Law each melee round he is in the chamber. These cannot leave the chamber.

Spirits of Law

POW 2D6+6 avg. 13

Notes: May only engage in spirit combat with chaotic beings. Destroys any chaotic being whose Magic Points it reduces to zero.

Kotchitaz's Tactics

This room is potentially lethal for both sides, although the broos will be unable to hold out for long due to Vrang's Spirit of Law. This is the best opportunity that the PC's will get against the chaos folk.

The Fourth Chamber; The Chamber of Darkness

Overview

All light is extinguished upon entering this cavern, it is completely pitch black.

Effect on Game Mechanics

Visually reliant races can do nothing except fumble around trying to find the exit. It is impossible to find the place where the characters entered. Kotchitaz can see through his *Soul Sight* and Vrang can smell out Old Lady Bloody-Hag. In this way these two will follow each other around the cave, each buying time for his own gang to find their way out.

Roll on the following encounter table each melee round until everybody has left the chamber. When conduct the fight in the next chamber introduce PC's and NPC's according to how long it took them to get out of the fourth chamber.

D100	Encounter
01-80	Nothing
81-85	Friend (not Vrang)
86-90	Foe (not Kotchitaz)
91-92	Vrang
93-94	Kotchitaz
95-00	Exit

Note that Vrang will be the last to leave, following Kotchitaz. If a PC sticks with Vrang he will not encounter Kotchitaz although if Vrang finds the exit he will not leave but will continue to follow Kotchitaz (who knows where the exit is).

The Disease Table

At the end of the scenario roll on the following table for each character who has been injured by the broo, or who has been exposed to disease by handling their possessions. This saves on book keeping.

1D20	Disease Caught
01-03	Wasting Disease (STR)
04-05	Creeping Chills (CON)
06	Brain Fever (INT)
07-08	Soul Waste (POW)
09-11	Shakes (DEX)
12-20	None

The Fifth Chamber; The Chamber of Disorder

Overview

This chamber is totally unfamiliar in content. At its centre a giant stands by a large bonfire which illuminates the surroundings. The giant will attack PC's and NPC's alike as they enter the chamber. When the battle really begins to swing determine randomly which side he sides with.

Effect on Game Mechanics

The bonfire cannot be put out even by lots of water or a huge *Extinguish* spell. All spells cast have an automatic 50% chance of being cast. Critical hits always occur on a roll of 01-05 and fumbles on a roll of 96-00.

Kotchitaz's Tactics

Kotchitaz has figured out that Old Lady Bloody-Hag is getting stronger by now and so he plans to do two things. Firstly, he will let his ancestral spirit attack Vrang. Secondly, he will let fly his *Reverse Chaos* spell at another of Vrang's party. He will also do his utmost to cause the other clansmen trouble by giving his broo magical support. When the clansmen are beaten back he will order his gang into the next chamber where Old Lady Bloody-Hag is keen to go.

If things look bad for him he releases Old Lady Bloody-Hag to manifest herself and then flees with her to the final chamber.

The Sixth Chamber; The Chamber of Chaos

Overview

This chamber has no illumination; slime dribbles down the walls giving them the appearance of a quivering motion. There is an aura of evil pervading the chamber.

Effects on Game Mechanics

All DEX rolls should be at best DEXx4%. Each melee round any chaotic creature receives a chaos feature for use that melee round on a roll of POWx2%. Kotchitaz's fetch's POW

counts towards this roll. Old Lady Bloody-Hag does not receive this advantage.

Kotchitaz's Tactics

Kotchitaz and his band have no choice but to fight to the last here.

Concluding the Scenario

Consequences of Failure

Fleeing from any chamber except the first sends the character back to the first chamber. Kotchitaz or Old Lady Bloody-Hag will never do this so for the Characters to have failed they must all be dead or have fled the caverns.

Upon leaving or fleeing the caverns the Sacred Time will have ended -- re-entering them the individual finds them in their normal reality with no sign of the Sacred Time inhabitants.

If she is not banished Old Lady Bloody-Hag will attain a physical form for the year and harass the area at the head of a huge and powerful chaos band. She will be able to run wild until Vrang Killer-of-Chaos can manifest and repeat the *Six Beads of Vanquished Spirit* next Storm Season. If she is destroyed during the year she can reform at the location of the six chambers, her new centre of power.

If Kotchitaz escapes and not Old Lady Bloody-Hag he can locate her again using his secret paths across the Otherworld. Doing so however grants Vrang the opportunity to manifest again.

Feel free to incorporate more convoluted otherworldly sequences if you wish!



Old Man Longfinger (possessed by Vrang Killer-of Chaos)

STR 6 Move: 3
 CON 8 Fatigue: 14-4=10
 SIZ 13 Hit Points: 11
 INT 10* Magic Points: 34
 POW 34* DEX SR: 3
 DEX 5
 APP 5
 (* -- characteristics applicable only to Vrang)

location	melee	missile	points
right leg	01-04	01-03	0/4
left leg	05-08	04-06	0/4
abdomen	09-11	07-10	0/4
chest	12	11-15	0/5
right arm	13-15	16-17	0/3
left arm	16-18	18-19	0/3
head	19-20	20	0/4

weapon	sr	atk	damage	par	pts
2h Spear	6	205%	1d8+1	198%	10

Spells (100%): Six beads of Vanquished Spirit (ritual).

Skills: Climb 88%, Dodge 100%, Jump 90%, Listen 99%, Scan 40%, Search 40%, Smell Chaos 100%, Hide 75%.

Equipment: A G-string, six beads on a cord, and a spear.

Special Abilities: Vrang is invulnerable to all except magical damage, unless it is done by Old Lady Bloody-Hag, or a weapon with a spell on it cast by her.

Notes: The Six Beads of Vanquished Spirit is Vrang's weapon against Old Lady Bloody-Hag, which reasserts their Godtime reality of sequential opposition. In the otherworld Vrang is victorious in this sequence.

Unlike the gods, these minor spirits are not bound intricately to myths by the compact of Time. The sequence to which they are subservient is very vague, unlike, say, Yemalio's journey to the Hill of Gold.

The sequence has six stages which follow the following themes: stability; harmony; change; darkness; disorder; chaos. The fight gets harder as the stages slip into a representation of the mythical Greater Darkness, although Vrang Killer of Chaos triumphed in the end.

Details for Old Man Longfinger (Suppressed Ego)

INT 12 Magic Points: 11
 POW 11 DEX SR: 3

weapon	sr	atk	damage	par	pts
Fist	8	52%	1d3	13%	3
Grapple	8	55%	special		
Bite	8	50%	1d2		
Thru Rock	4	51%	1d4		

Divine Magic (53%): Any as appropriate to local Trickster cult

The Foes

The chaos group is presented here; it can be adjusted to suit your players. As well as Old Lady Bloody-Hag and the shaman who contacted her, the chaos band consists of six broos, a scorpion man, and a harpy.

Bbrabsitch

Scorpion Man, Initiate of Bagog

STR 21 Move: 3
 CON 10 Fatigue: 31-11=20
 SIZ 16 Hit Points: 13
 INT 6 Magic Points: 9
 POW 9 DEX SR: 2
 DEX 16
 APP 7

location	melee	missile	points
rh leg	01	01	3/3
rc leg	02	02	3/3
rf leg	03-04	03	3/3
lh leg	05	04	3/3
lc leg	06	05	3/3
lf leg	07-08	06	3/3
tail	09-10	07	3/5
thorax	11-12	08-10	3/5
chest	13-14	11-15	7/6
r arm	15-16	16-17	6/4
l arm	17-18	18-19	6/4
head	19-20	20	7/5

Note: Bbrabsitch cannot be incapacitated by loss of a leg; only the first three points of leg damage affect his total Hit Points. If Bbrabsitch loses two legs on one side, he cannot employ any Agility skills; if he loses three on one side he falls over.

weapon	sr	atk	damage	par	pts
2h Spear	6	53%	1d8+1+1d6	51%	10
Club	6	50%	1d10+1d6	24%	10
Buckler	7	20%	1d4+1d6	50%	8
Sting	6(9)	64%	2d6+POT	10	Venom
Sling	2/7	55%	1d8		r100/100

Spirit Magic (34%): Protection 2, Disrupt.

Divine Magic (89%): (One Use) Venom Boosting 1, Carapace (2).

Skills: Climb 72%, Jump 22%, First Aid 25%, Listen 50%, Scan 52%, Search 20%, Track 37%.

Equipment: Bbrabsitch wears a bezaunted shirt, composite helm and cuirboilli vambraces. He carries a short spear, heavy mace, buckler and sling, with thirty stones. A leather pouch holds the stones, some rotten bones, and ten beads.

Notes: Bbrabsitch is very stupid, and will only act upon orders, or unless something appeals to his greed. He is sensible enough to cast Protection before a fight.

Broos

Initiates of Thed

STR 15 Move: 4
 CON 16 Fatigue: 31-ENC
 SIZ 16 Hit Points: 16
 INT 13 Magic Points: 13
 POW 13 DEX SR: 3
 DEX 10
 APP 7

weapon	sr	atk	damage	par	pts
Axe or	6	49%	1d8+2+1d4	32%	8
Club	6	49%	1d10+1d4	32%	10
Buckler	7	16%	2d4	44%	8
1h Spear	6	45%	1d8+1+1d4	13%	10
Butt	7(9)	55%	1d6+1d4		
Self Bow	3/9	45%	1d6+1		r90/120

Skills: Climb 60%, Dodge 28%-ENC, Conceal 58%, Listen 45%, Scan 50%, Search 35%, Track 48%, Hide 33%, Sneak 29%-ENC.

Broo One

Fatigue: 31-15=16
 Hit Points: 16
 Magic Points: 13

location	melee	missile	points
right leg	01-04	01-03	3/6
left leg	05-08	04-06	3/6
abdomen	09-11	07-10	5/6
chest	12	11-15	5/8
right arm	13-15	16-17	3/5
left arm	16-18	18-19	3/5
head	19-20	20	3/6

Spirit Magic (50%): Bladesharp 2, Sneeze (2).

Equipment: Broo One wears cuirboilli limb armour, and a ragged ring hauberk. Like the other broo, he carries an axe, buckler, spear, and a bow and twenty arrows.

Unlike the other broo, he has a flint dagger, which holds a matrix for the Spirit Magic spell of The Peaceful Cut.

Broo Two

Fatigue: 31-6=25
 Hit Points: 16
 Magic Points: 13

location	melee	missile	points
right leg	01-04	01-03	0/6
left leg	05-08	04-06	0/6
abdomen	09-11	07-10	0/6
chest	12	11-15	0/8
right arm	13-15	16-17	0/5
left arm	16-18	18-19	0/5
head	19-20	20	3/6

Spirit Magic (59% -- 65% when disincorporate): Spirit Screen 2, Disrupt.

Equipment: This broo travels naked except for his weapons. He carries a club rather than an axe.

Notes: This broo is utterly hairless; his chaos feature makes him extremely difficult to kill.

If the broo is slain, his soul manifests on the Mundane Plane for 5d10 melee rounds. During this time, the broo's soul will attack his foes in spirit combat, first casting Spirit Shield. Any Magic Points lost by those the broo's soul attacks, are added to the hit points of the broo's corpse.

When the broo's hit points reach a positive score, it becomes alive again and its soul is re-united with its body. While disincorporate in this fashion, the broo's soul may not possess another body.

Broo Three

Fatigue: 31-21=10

Hit Points: 16

Magic Points: 13

location	melee	missile	points
right leg	01-04	01-03	5/6
left leg	05-08	04-06	5/6
abdomen	09-11	07-10	5/6
chest	12	11-15	12/8
right arm	13-15	16-17	5/5
left arm	16-18	18-19	5/5
head	19-20	20	8/6

Spirit Magic (44%): Protection 2, Bladesharp 2.

Equipment: This broo wears a full suit of ringmail, in addition to a brigandine cuirass.

Broo Four

Fatigue: 31-15=16

Hit Points: 16

Magic Points: 13

location	melee	missile	points
right leg	01-04	01-03	3/6
left leg	05-08	04-06	3/6
abdomen	09-11	07-10	5/6
chest	12	11-15	5/8
right arm	13-15	16-17	3/5
left arm	16-18	18-19	3/5
head	19-20	20	3/6

Spirit Magic (50%): Fireblade (4), Darkwall (2).

Equipment: Wears cuirboilli and ring armour.

Notes: This broo's tongue constantly drips out of its mouth and regrows. Upon its death the broo turns into a gorp.

Broo Five

Fatigue: 31-10=21

Hit Points: 16

Magic Points: 13+5 stored

location	melee	missile	points
right leg	01-04	01-03	1/6
left leg	05-08	04-06	1/6
abdomen	09-11	07-10	1/6
chest	12	11-15	1/8
right arm	13-15	16-17	0/5
left arm	16-18	18-19	0/5
head	19-20	20	3/6

Spirit Magic (55%): Shimmer 1, Speedart (1).

Equipment: This broo wears as armour a long leather tunic covering the torso and legs. In melee he use a club. He also has a long bronze dagger which stores magic points when used to sacrifice sentient beings to any deity. It stores one magic point per five POW of the sacrificed victim. It can store up to twenty magic points in this way. Kotchitaz is unaware that this lackey possesses such an item.

Notes: This broo is not a close-in fighter, he prefers to use his bow at which he has a skill of 63%.

Broo Six

Fatigue: 31-13=18

Hit Points: 16 Magic Points: 13

location	melee	missile	points
right leg	01-04	01-03	2/6
left leg	05-08	04-06	2/6
abdomen	09-11	07-10	5/6
chest	12	11-15	5/8
right arm	13-15	16-17	2/5
left arm	16-18	18-19	2/5
head	19-20	20	3/6

Equipment: This broo wears ringmail and leather armour.



Hoggorad A Harpy

STR 16 Move: 1/8 flying
CON 9 Fatigue: 25
SIZ 8 Hit Points: 9
INT 10 Magic Points: 10
POW 10 DEX SR: 3
DEX 11
APP 6

location	melee	missile	points
r claw	01-02	01	1/3
l claw	03-04	02	1/3
abdomen	05-07	03-06	1/3
chest	08-09	07-11	1/4
r wing	10-13	12-15	1/3
l wing	14-17	16-19	1/3
head	18-20	20	1/3

weapon	sr	attk	damage
Claw	9	39%	1d6+disease
Stone	3	64%	1d6/3m dropped
Droppings	3	32%	-1d10 APP+ disease

Spirit Magic (50%): Multimissile 2.

Skills: Climb 44%, Dodge 47%, Listen 25%, Scan 86%, Search 51%, Hide 57%.

Notes: Not a fighter, Hoggorad's primary role is as a scout. She is unlikely to participate in any way in a melee (even by dropping rocks on it) unless the chances of her being injured are remote.

Kotchitaz
Broo shaman of Thed

STR 17 Move: 4
CON 14 Fatigue: 31-6=25
SIZ 17 Hit Points: 16
INT 15 Magic Points: 55 (Including Fetch)
POW 14 +32 stored = 87
DEX 17 DEX SR: 2
APP 10

location	melee	missile	points
right leg	01-04	01-03	0/5
left leg	05-08	04-06	0/5
abdomen	09-11	07-10	0/5
chest	12	11-15	0/6
right arm	13-15	16-17	0/4
left arm	16-18	18-19	0/4
head	19-20	20	3/5

weapon	sr	atk	damage	par	pts
Lead Dagger	6	73%	1d4+2+1d6	40%	6
2h L.Spear	4	102%	1d10+1+1d6	88%	10
Butt*	6(9)		2d6		

* -- Kotchitaz can only Butt in combination with a dagger attack; his spear is too long for such a combination.

Magic Skills: Ceremony 57%, Enchant 40%.

Spirit Magic (64%): [Kotchitaz] Heal 5, Bladesharp 5, Shimmer 5. [Fetch] Befuddle (2), Demoralise (2), Detect Enemy, Dullblade 4, Fanaticism.

[Intellect Spirits] Protection 3, Visibility (2), Bind Ancestral Spirit, Bind Power Spirit, Spell Matrix Enchantment. [Matrix] Bind Intellect Spirit.

Divine Magic (94%): Reverse Chaos (2), Sanctify, Spirit Block 2, Worship Thed. Skills: Climb 83%, Dodge 56%, Jump 55%, Evaluate 45%, First Aid 39%, Listen 72%, Scan 75%, Search 41%, Track 68%, Hide 18%, Sneak 20%.

Equipment: Kotchitaz carries a long spear and a lead dagger that Old Lady Bloody-Hag told him to keep. His spell matrix is in a ceremonial skull-rattle.

His Intellect Spirits are bound into bone chimes on a leather thong tied about Kotchitaz's wrist. Whenever the chimes clash together the Intellect Spirits scream in agony, audible to anybody with Soul Sight or similar spells. The wristlet also contains a bound Spell Spirit (INT 4, POW 8) which casts the Divine spell Reverse Chaos on anybody except Kotchitaz who touches the wristlet.

Special Abilities: Kotchitaz has all the powers of a shaman. His defensive magic point total always includes those of his Fetch.

Notes: Kotchitaz will stay out of trouble, providing magical support to his band, and harassing the PC's with spells such as Demoralise and Befuddle. He will keep Broo Five, the archer, close by to him at all times so that Old Lady Bloody-Hag can cast spells on to the arrows targeted at Vrang.

Kotchitaz saves his Reverse Chaos spell for emergencies; remember that its effect is temporal, lasting only 15 minutes. Reverse Chaos is most effective when there are chaos haters among the opponents.

Kotchitaz will release his Ancestral Spirit at some stage in the adventure, probably so that he can draw on his Fetch's magic points. When he does this he will cast Visibility and Spirit Block on it, and send it to attack Vrang.



Fetch: INT 10 POW 41 (Manifests as a vulture with a single eye above its beak).
Note: The Fetch's magic points can never be reduced to 35 or less, unless either the Ancestral Spirit or Old Lady Bloody-Hag have been previously released.

Captive Spirits:

Broo Ancestor (INT 12, POW 10)
Spirit Magic (50%): Firearrow (2), Protection 2.

Old Lady Bloody-Hag
Malign Spirit

STR 24 Move: 3
SIZ 24 Hit Points: 24
INT 13 Magic Points: 25
POW 25 DEX SR: 3
DEX 10
APP 10

weapon	sr	atk	damage
Cleaver	5	55%	4d6
L Claw	6(8)	55%	3d6
R Claw	6	55%	3d6

Spirit Magic (95%): Speedart (1), Visibility (3).

Godtime Magic (automatic): Coldweapon (4)

Skills: Climb 72%, Dodge 30%, Jump 37%, Listen 73%, Scan 80%, Search 80%.

Equipment: In her physical form Old Lady Bloody-Hag carries her bone meat-cleaver, and wears a bloodstained white robe.

Special Abilities: Old Lady Bloody-Hag is a spirit who adopts a physical form when manifest.

As a spirit she is more an ally to Kotchitaz than a captive spirit. She can cast spells through his senses with a successful concentration roll (INT x 3%), independently of his actions, and the two are in constant communication. For spells which are ranged as touch (such as Speedart) Kotchitaz must touch the item concerned while Old Lady Bloody-Hag casts the spell.

To manifest on the physical plane Old Lady Bloody-Hag must be released by Kotchitaz and cast Visibility. She is vulnerable only to magical damage, or damage done by iron or copper weapons. Any damage that she sustains goes to her total hit points, when this reaches zero she is banished to the inner spirit world.

Notes: Coldweapon functions like Fireblade, except that this spell cannot set fire to objects it touches, and it can be cast on any type of weapon, including missiles. The spell lasts as long as the weapon is held in the hand, or until it strikes first time.

Four-metre Giant
Creature of Disorder

STR 38 Move: 4
CON 27 Fatigue: 65-26=39
SIZ 32 Hit Points: 30
INT 12 Magic Points: 13
POW 13 DEX SR: 3
DEX 11
APP 12

location	melee	missile	points
right leg	01-04	01-03	17/10
left leg	05-08	04-06	17/10
abdomen	09-11	07-10	9/10
chest	12	11-15	9/12
right arm	13-15	16-17	9/8
left arm	16-18	18-19	9/8
head	19-20	20	9/10

Note: Most attackers roll a d10 for the hit location when attacking giants.

weapon	sr	atk	damage
Big Club	4	42%	3d6
Kick	5(7)	39%	4d6

Skills: Smell Blood 100%, Make Fire 2000%

Equipment: Plate greaves, big club, firemaker.

Special Abilities: This giant is immune to fire damage.

Notes: The giants club is always on fire, and may set light to flammable targets.

A Pentian Cosmology

by Mark Holsworth

AS TOLD to Marco Jasman by Totis!see, a shaman from the Eastern Feliniv. Totis!see when he told this to me was 112 years old. Totis!see was born shortly after the Night of Horrors and had become snow blind in the great northern trek of the Feliniv when he was still a proud young warrior. His shamanic teacher was Hava-No who was a student of Little Dog, who, of course, was a student of Sheng Seleris.

"In the centre of the world is the World Tree, you may not be able to see it but it is there, around all of the trunk is the world which you see and the world which I see (1). The World Tree is very tall and its seven branches reach to the seven heavens (2) and its roots are very deep so that they extend all the way to the land of the dead (3). And the shade of its leaves shade all of the world (4).

But there is something beyond all of this as the first mortal, Sheng Seleris, who ventured so far

discovered and that is the plane of the Runes, where there are no gods but only pure power of the Runes. There are more runes than just those of the earth, sky, water, fire, man and magic (5) There are telkay runes (6). Now some people believe that Law and Chaos are pulling the universe apart but this is not true because they are just two runes amongst telkay runes of which no one or two or other group can be more important.

And everything in these worlds, the

world of grass and snow, the world of your ancestors, the world of the gods, and the worlds of the spirits are but the shadow of the World Tree and of the Runes. For they are tied to them and are but the poorest scratch drawings such that a child might produce with a burnt stick on the bark of a tree. If there is a world beyond the world of the runes no-one can say for certain for not even the gods or the spirits have ventured beyond the world of the runes."

Marco Jasman's Notes

- (1) In this case two quite different worlds as the shaman also sees the spirit plane.
- (2) The Godplane.
- (3) The Underworld.
- (4) Glorantha and the Hero Plane.
- (5) These I believe to be the traditional runes of the Pentian people.
- (6) 'Telkay' is a Pentian number equivalent to our 1,000,213 which the Pentians obstinately believe is the highest number possible, after which

counting is not possible or irrelevant to mathematical calculation or expression. It was determined by Sheng Seleris who one long winter night counted all the stars in the sky to determine the number. He later checked this number by counting every blade of grass in Pent. Totis!see told this to me on an earlier occasion and other shamans have confirmed the tale.

Mark Holsworth is working on *Pentpak*.

Sheng Seleris

Sheng Seleris was the Son of the Morning and a powerful demigod who rose to oppose the Red Goddess.

He lead the Pentian Nomads against the Lunar Empire with much success. In 1389 his nomads laid siege to Glamour and Sheng Seleris wrestled with the Red Emperor atop the gates of the city. Though the Emperor finally drove Seleris and the nomads away the wrestlers had stolen secret

fears and powers from each other.

Seleris had stolen a portion of the Emperors worship, Kostaddi. And in 1443 he revealed this and the whole province rebelled and fell into his worship. Yara Aranis tried to challenge this but was defeated by Seleris and severely wounded.

After this Seleris' powers grew. He was apotheosized as a Hero by the gods and his power lit a new star in the heavens. His armies conquered and plundered the lands of the Lunar Empire, and hunted for the Red Emperor. Seleris even went to the Red Moon itself and ransacked the

Emperors Moon Palace in search of him. Yet he could not find the Emperor.

The final battle took place in 1460 when the Red Emperor finally revealed himself in all his power. Seleris was utterly defeated and his soul was tossed deep into the Pits of Perdition where it lies broken and suffering from the demons of hell. Some wonder, though, why it is so heavily guarded.

Sources: *Wyrms Footnotes 13 & 14, The History of The Lunar Empire*, by Greg Stafford.



LETTERS

GAREN SWING MFF

Simon Phipp
Coventry

I was surprised to see extracts from my letter on your letters page (*Tales 2*) as the contents were not intended for public consumption and may well have been taken out of context.

I said the artwork ranged from good to bad. Perhaps I should have said most of the artwork was OK; some was very good but some was awful. The zine deserves good artwork, not a five second drawing. Needless to say I draw like a blind duck with no arms but I can still appreciate quality.

Issue 2 was very good, shame you didn't bring it out first. The Hall lights were on, but was anyone home? A battle manual is all very well, but is anyone going to use it? Most GMs will know which way a battle is going to turn out unless the PCs can alter it with heroic action not through the use of esoteric skills.

A couple of comments about my Heroes article (*Tales 2*): Waha's Quest was featured in *Different Worlds 4* and not *Different Worlds 1*; the cheerful chappie illustrated in the article must be incredibly powerful or incredibly stupid to heroquest - bare head and arms, linen trews and skirt? He wouldn't stand a chance.

Whilst I don't agree with Phil Murphy's phrasing ('dim pleb subbers') I do agree with his view on the inclusion of (dare I say it) highbrow articles. What you must do is strike a balance between run-of-the-mill material and good quality stuff.

Joe Roberts
Bath

I think you pulled off issue 2 pretty well. By the very nature of a fanzine it's pointless to dissect and analyse as some of the people who wrote letters seemed to have done. At this stage a zine is more a focus for enthusiasm in the game(s). The rather self indulgent and negative condemnations that people made in issue 2 are exactly what *Tales* doesn't need. In the beginning a zine is held together by input and enthusiasm. A zine is an entity that must be tamed and cultivated, not beaten for its sins.

There was some truth in what the likes of Phil Murphy said. What we are faced with today is a sad parody of RPGs: acres of mind numbing crap that does away with the need for imagination. But to make an impression on the market and/or achieve a decent circulation, *Tales* will have to adjust and conform to what's happening currently in roleplaying.

Introducing the punters to a style and format they're familiar with will do a lot more to keep the zine afloat than keeping it a beautiful but inaccessible RQ ivory tower. On the other hand, are there enough of the RQ old-guard left to sustain *Tales* without having to prostitute itself?

Stephen Forshaw
Holmes Chapel

I think the gist of Phil Murphy's letter was that *Tales* will have to compromise to succeed. I think he's missing the point. *Tales* is first and foremost an RQ/Glorantha magazine and its primary audience will be

RQ/Glorantha fans. If you were to take Phil's advice and turn into a generalist RPG magazine you would alienate all your present readers.

Keith Nellist
Liverpool

I think Phil Murphy is possibly possessed by a spirit of Profit-Making-Above-All-Else. I think *Tales* should keep to its high ideals, stay interested in Gloranthan myth and legend and art for art's sake.

**Hopefully the questionnaire should give me a better idea of how everyone feels about this debate.*

However I must point out that I will never publish something I feel is substandard. People are missing the point, the purpose of the zine is not to make loads of money. The purpose is to provide information on Rune-Quest, and especially Glorantha - however esoteric. If the zine never got another subber I'd be happy to carry on. But if I had to print/write/edit, and especially type up, what I thought were run-of-the-mill articles then the zine would collapse from lack of enthusiasm. However, I am aware that some readers are beginners and some commentators might be confusing substandard with elementary. In an attempt to encourage and not alienate I might at times seem to labour on subjects and rules others think obvious.

Timothy C Bateson
Oxenhope

May I raise one point about *Tales 2*? Not everyone has access to the

various issues of *Different Worlds*. To be told that Battleskill is the same as in *DW 28* is irritating enough but to be told in an article on heroquesting (incidentally the only one I have ever seen) that the practice-run heroquest can be shown from two back issues of *Different Worlds*, is frustrating and tantalising. I feel like I'm missing out.

**I did intend to include a brief description of Battle skill, but I was unable to get express permission from Chaosium. In the future I'll try harder to get permission to publish the relevant extracts.*

Adam Crossingham Farnborough

Just read issue 2 and the letters page has got me off my butt to write this. The artwork in issues 1 & 2 are good, better in places than that in some pro. publications I've seen. The scenario versus cameo argument has gone on for ever and will continue to do so. So, ignore the controversy and publish in any way you like just make sure what is published is fresh. Unimaginative or stale scenarios are bad, and I can write bad scenarios myself. Issue 2's expanded cameos were excellent.

Derek Holmes Merseyside

How wacky of you to provide a contents page and then not number the pages. Chortle.

The heroquest article was okay but could have done with more actual game mechanics. This is what I have always thought heroquesting was like and lets face facts, HeroQuest the supplement is never going to make an appearance: if Stafford hasn't sorted out the system by now, he never will.

Jon Quaife South Nutfield

It is excellent to see that at last we have a RuneQuest magazine again! With the contract for *Sartarpak* coming to the UK, it is essential that a forum for open discussion exists, and *Tales* provides this. Simon Phipp's 'Heroes' made some interesting and amusing points, although I'm not certain Otherworld quests should follow strict rules and

principles. Heroquests, like so many other features of mysticism, will always remain nebulous in nature and definition.

The latin names were omitted from my 'Red Elves' article. Mud Goblins are known in scholarly circles as *Slor Mucus*, and Lopnorifings as *Slor Lopnori*.

Steve Gilham Haslingfield

So far the bias suggests *Tales* is a Glorantha zine rather than an RQ one. There is of course a wide difference. The bulk of my RQ gaming has been in non-Gloranthan settings (and hence with variant magics); on the other hand, I have often entertained the idea of tackling Glorantha with modified D&D mechanics just to show it could be done.

Part of the reason for non-Gloranthan RQ has been that until 1989 the information of the world outside Prax was inadequate. The main reason for non-RQ Glorantha is a test of the versatility of other roleplay systems (including RQ3) in simulating the original given world structure.

'Nomad Clan' (*Tales 1*) is such a test; a good solid article, but the RQ3 mechanics (no Runelords) have revised the cults so much that social structures must be adjusted to match.

The idea of bone armour is an interesting one. You might also have other exotic armours, for example rhino cuir - more like plate armour in stopping-power.

'Skill' (*Tales 2*) reminds me of a suggestion from long ago of negative-karma RQ, whereby one gains skill ticks for failing rather than succeeding - thus improving the lot of beginners, while keeping Runelords in check.

Issue 2 seemed to meet its page count more by adroit use of huge titles, copious whitespace and undisturbed art than by content.

Oliver Dickinson Haxby

On 'Staying Alive' (*Tales 2*), I have to comment that spell barrages are now forbidden. There is nothing to stop you slamming spells at someone in a sequence of strike ranks, but it is clearly stated in

Magic Book that no more than one can hit at a time. The acolytes of the Earth Priestess presented in *Monster Coliseum* and in the GW version of *RQ Monsters*, cast their spells on successive strike ranks as a result of training.

Peter Roach Edinburgh

While I felt that most of Mark Morrison's suggestions were technically correct I have to say I disagreed with the tenor of 'Staying Alive'.

In having a complex combat strategy you lose some of the excitement. I imagine melee as a chaotic business with most combatants unsure of what is going on. Would Wolfhead worry about which spells to cast and when? Not if I were playing him.

By examining the rules too carefully players may become over mechanical and in the process lose their sense of fear. However, I do agree with the last point - if you're beaten run-for-it, and quick. Your articles are Glorantha orientated. Is this a policy, a prejudice or just a lack of submitted material?

**Prejudice and a lack of submitted material.*

Alex Davis Bath

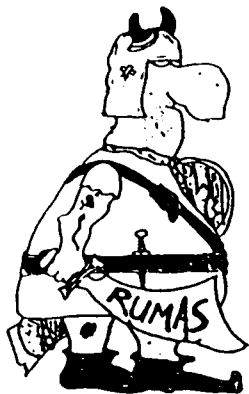
'Staying Alive' emphasised that part of RQ I'm least happy with (too much magic) and it could lead to a monotonous routine of actions everytime there's a fight. As far as I'm concerned fights should be avoided and when they do occur, be as deadly and confusing as possible.

Simon Phipp Coventry

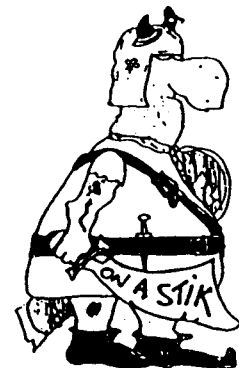
'Do'n't' is not the standard abbreviation of 'does not' - 'doesn't' is. It only has one character extra and looks much nicer. I didn't mention it last time as I assumed it was a typo, not a deliberate abbreviation.

Oliver Dickinson York

I thought Dafergrickery was funny - you will find the "do'n't" spelling in the *Alice* books by the way; it's old-fashioned, that's all.



RUMOURS



RUMOUR INDICATORS

- T - This indicates that the rumour is true.
- F - This indicates that the rumour is false.
- R - This indicates that the rumour may or may not be true at the referee's option.
- B - This indicates that the rumour is generally true but that it also has a substantial false component.

- 1) The Lunar occupation of Sartar is destined to last some forty years. F
- 2) "She Who Waits" refers to the stereotypical Darra Happan housewife, whose husband is enjoying a pint at his local. B
- 3) Four different groups in Australia are working on *RuneQuest* scenario packs for Chaosium, including *Pent Pak*. T
- 4) Greg Stafford thinks the "Round Earth" theory (all the rage in the Lhankor Mhy temple of Nochet) is a load of garbage and "not worthy of immortalization by a Lhankor Mhy sage". B
- 5) Skilled Aldryami warriors who lose hands sharpen their fore-limbs and join elite anti-vampire units. R
- 6) The use of Ducks in Glorantha is a really good idea. B
- 7) Warner Bros. are about to make a major *RuneQuest* film. Titles mooted so far are, *Room with a Broo*, *Seven Brides For Seven Mothers* and *A Fistfull of Clacks*. R
- 8) The Lunar "Dart Competitions" are ruthless private wars between the noble families of the Empire for power and influence. All such nobles are legitimate targets for each other, by fair means or foul. The contests are only tolerated by the Red Emperor as long as they do not lead to civil war, affect central taxation, or lead to too much innocent loss of life. T
- 9) The next *RuneQuest* supplements to be released are *The Haunted Ruins*, *The Lost City of Eldarad* and *HeroQuest*. B
- 10) Delecti the Necromancer's favourite dish is undead Duck marinated for five year in Dragonewts blood (it's delectable). B
- 11) Yanafil Tarnils only defeated Humakt by being resurrected, to the horror and disgust of the Humakti. T
- 12) Greg Stafford has *no* control over the art going into Avalon Hill supplements. T
- 13) The reason why Storm Bull temples are so small is that if more than one hundred Storm Bulls ever got together one of them would fumble his *Sense Chaos*, causing a massacre! B

Letters cont.

David James
Oldham

Who is Phil Murphy? I hope his opinions are more solidly based than his knowledge of the rules of punctuation. Just for the record, here is Lewis Carroll in his preface to *Sylvie & Bruno* Concluded:-

"Other critics have objected to certain innovations in spelling, such as ca'n't, wo'n't.... In reply, I can only plead my firm conviction that

the popular usage is wrong. As to ca'n't, it will not be disputed that, in all other words ending in 'n't', these letters are an abbreviation of 'not'; and it is surely absurd to suppose that, in this solitary instance, 'not' is represented by 't'. In fact 'can't' is the proper abbreviation for 'can it' just as 'is't' is for 'is it'. Again, in 'wo'n't' the first apostrophe is needed because the word 'would

here is abridged into 'wo'; but I hold it proper to spell 'don't' with only one apostrophe because the word 'do' is complete."

Matthew Tudor
Colchester

My interpretation of the warrior's accent precluded the use of 'doesn't' in certain situations. I favoured what I consider a more guttural and colloquial 'do'n't'.

Serious Money

A tale of deception by Oliver Dickinson

ONE HOT afternoon I am taking my ease in Loud Lilina's and thinking about Swifty, and in a little while I will explain why, but first I must tell you about Swifty, for at one time he is really quite a prominent character in Pavis, and many citizens consider it a great loss to the community when he departs. Now, Swifty is so called because he is a very rapid guy in every way, shape, manner, and form. In fact, he does the finest impression of a guy in two different places at once that you will ever see, which is partly because of all the legwork that he puts into his activities, but mostly because he fears that if he stays in one spot for too long someone may catch up with him -- and at all times there are likely to be persons wishing to catch up with Swifty who he does not wish to have catch up with him, in case it is injurious to his health. For Swifty is a hustler, and always he is promoting persons into laying out their dough in ways which prove to be unwise, and also expensive, and furthermore he is expert at telling the tale, and he even has experience at the old shakedown, which it is most impolite to call blackmail, and in fact, for any dodge that requires nothing but a fast brain and tongue, Swifty is your man.

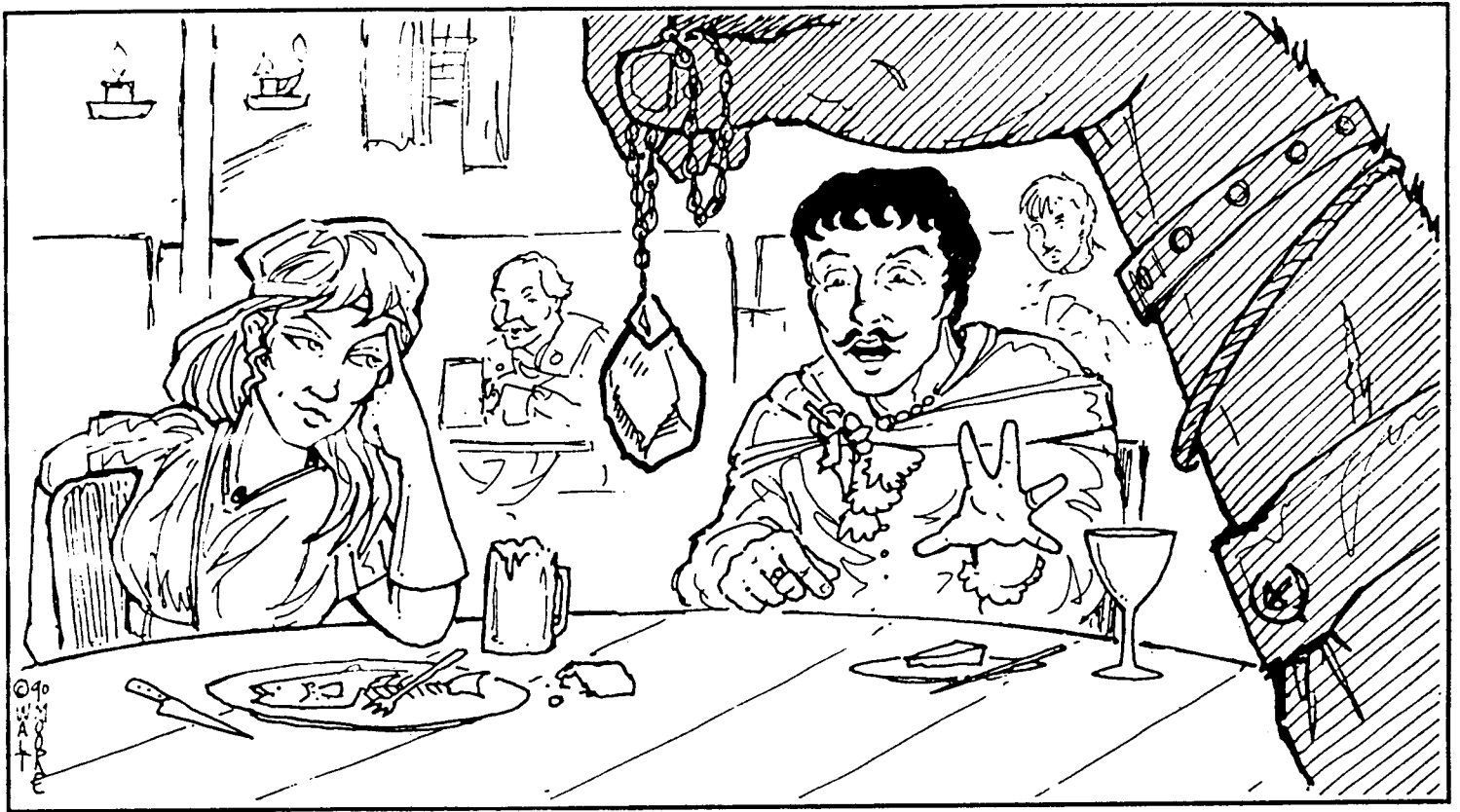
Now you may think that such a guy will not last long in Pavis, where there are so many guys, and dolls too, who are ready to resort to violence if they are sore at somebody. But Swifty is very good at rounding himself up with persons wishing him harm, if he can get them talking, and he displays remarkable skill at the quick getaway if he cannot. Then he must lie low, of course, but he is also very good at this, being what the story tellers love to call a master of disguise. Indeed, it is generally agreed that the way that Swifty can make himself look like somebody else is practically uncanny, and very few people can tell you what he really looks like, except that he is short and constantly on the move, and when I am not seeing him often I tend to forget his looks myself.

But one of the most remarkable things about Swifty is the amount of work that he puts into his scams, whatever kind of score is involved, and they are really works of art, and many citizens will tell you that he is a Trickster at heart. Also, they are often very

comical, except to his marks, and this is of benefit to him, for it causes many who have unfinished business with him to forgive and forget, because a good laugh is not so easy to come by in this man's town. Moreover, Swifty has plenty of sense and is never too greedy, for a mark who loses all may become quite obsessed with getting even and keep on a con artist's tail for so long that it completely hampers business and becomes a great nuisance.

It is because of one of his most comical scams that Swifty finally has to leave town. This scam is known to one and all as Broos Anonymous, and is the most famous thing that Swifty ever pulls off, although only old-timers, who are in Pavis for more than a year or two, will be familiar with the story. It all begins when Swifty starts going around among charitable and well-intentioned persons, especially those who are not too bright, and he is promoting the idea that there are broos out there who repent of their sins and wish to be cured of their evil ways, and they deserve encouragement and support. Now, even charitable and well-intentioned persons who are not too bright are not such rank suckers as to swallow such a proposition without evidence, but Swifty claims that he can produce such broos and will show them off in conditions of great secrecy, so that the Storm Bull cult does not get to hear of it. For the Storm Bulls are quite unwilling to listen to reason when it comes to broos, but will hold fast to the proposition that the only good broo is a dead broo. So Swifty arranges meetings well out of town to view his broos, and they are most convincing indeed, so he works up quite a bit of support. In fact, he even interests one or two Sages, who are willing to pay good dough to talk to broos and learn of their ways, because Sages just naturally love to collect such useless information.

Finally the grand inaugural meeting of the society to reclaim broos is announced, but no broos show up, and neither does Swifty, and all the funds collected to support these repentant broos also turn out to be missing. In fact, his broos turn out to be a bunch of Tricksters down on their luck who are hired, although Tricksters will be happy to pull such a stunt for nothing because that is what they are. There are glum



faces around town when this comes out, but most citizens laugh themselves sick, including the Storm Bulls, who go about saying that it is a good lesson to anyone who will believe that Chaos can change its nature. But they start to sing a different tune when it is learned that Swifty includes Healers among his marks, for all the straight cults are very down on wronging Healers in any way. Indeed, Swifty becomes quite unpopular with the cults when this gets about, but the main reason for his departure is that some of his marks have a little influence, while others are willing to lay out more dough on having him nailed; so that if he stays around Pavis he will be in quite a spot, what with law officers and bounty hunters and cult glory-seekers all turning the town upside down looking for him. So he clears out of Pavis altogether with his customary speed, and nothing is heard of him for so long that many believe him dead, and most do not care a bent clack, for after all they have other things to worry about, such as paying the rent.

Now the reason that I come to be thinking of Swifty is that all of a sudden a guy takes to infesting Loud Lilina's who is Swifty's meat if ever I see it. He wishes to be thought of as a great adventurer, and is forever boasting of his exploits and the loot he wins and the knowledge he acquires, but it is plain to one and all that he is just a rich guy playing at it, for always he is wearing fine clothes and carrying good weapons, and he has plenty to spend, which is most unusual for adventurers around Pavis. His name is Avidius Tiro, which is a Lunar kind of name, and to hear him tell it he stands good with the Lunars, for he loves to speak of dining with the Governor and other highups. In fact, it is hard to see why he chooses Lilina's rather than some joint with more tone to do his bragging in, but he may figure that his bluff will be called in Gimpy's, where they have more of the real

thing when it comes to adventurers, and furthermore he is getting a break, because Griselda is hardly ever in Lilina's at this time. For Griselda will express open scorn and disbelief very readily if she feels that this is called for and has very little time for blowhards such as Avidius, but no one else cares to take anything up with him, for he acts as if he knows how to handle his fancy weapons well enough for any of us.

While I am regretting Swifty's absence, the door crashes open and in rushes the guy who is known to one and all as Topknot ever since Griselda removes some from his head for doubting her word, and who now has a fair topknot going again, in fact. He fetches up against the bar in record time, closely followed by a tough-looking doll and a guy who looks to be nobody much, neither of whom I recollect seeing about before, and he is yelling, "Drinks on the house! We hit it!" Naturally there is quite a rush to the bar, but Lilina folds her arms in the way she has when she is going to be very hard to convince.

"Show me the colour of your money," she says. "I hear this drinks-on-me tune before."

"We are not trying to pull anything, Lilina," says Topknot, somewhat indignant. "We clean up, for a fact; see here!" And he opens his pack and pulls out a pouch from which he spills necklaces and rings and suchlike onto the bar, all glinting most prettily indeed. There is much whistling and exclamation, but Lilina still does not look too impressed. "How am I supposed to know what this is worth?" she growls. "It may be junk got up to look like the real thing, for all I know."

"Aw, come on," says Topknot. "I seem to remember you taking stuff for drinks before, and I think you know more about it than you are suggesting."

"All right, all right," says Lilina, "I will take this," and she points to a hefty-looking bracelet all set with stones. But now the doll speaks up and says. "Hey, that

is going to be worth more than a round of drinks, if I am any judge."

"And who are you," says Lilina, rounding on her, "and how do I know I can trust your judgement? You may be in with Topknot to con me," which is a most impolite thing to say, but then Lilina is famous for saying impolite things. But the doll stays cool, and even smiles a little. "I am Elsa from Adari," she says, "and I have no interest in trying to con you out of a few drinks for other people; I am after serious money. Now I may not be an expert, but my parents are jewellers, so I know a fair bit about such stuff, and to prove it I will give you an estimate on those earrings you wear, which are very nice but cannot cost you more than ten Lunars, tops."

Lilina goes red at this and looks ready to blast, but this Elsa continues to look at her coolly, and finally she seems to deflate, and says "OK, go ahead and pick me out something that will cover a round before some of these characters up and die on me."

So Elsa pulls out a small string of purple stones that she says is worth maybe twenty Lunars if you are selling, and Lilina agrees to take it at this value and starts serving, which is surely a great relief to one and all. Elsa and Topknot and the little guy, who is known to them as Brains, take their drinks to a table and spread out their haul, and most of those present, including Avidius, gather round to watch. Elsa does most of the valuing, but she calls in Brains on many items and he surely displays expert knowledge, as when he identifies one piece as a leftover from the days when Pavis is a great city, before the nomads bust everything up. But this is only a small item, and the rest is mostly low-value stuff, and Topknot begins to look sorrowful as he realises that his big haul is not so big after all, although there is enough to keep them for a season or two if they are not aiming to room in some high-class place like Jareen's round the corner. Finally there is only one piece left, and this looks like nothing whatsoever, for it is just a pendant of dull red rock with no shape to it, hanging on a chain of grey metal that may be lead.

"Well," says Elsa, "I never see anything like this before, for sure, and I do not know what it is doing with the rest, since it is not even pretty, but I guess it may be some curio."

But Brains seems quite excited. "Then I am smarter than you, Elsa," he says. "For I may be wrong, but if I am guessing and have just one guess, I will say that this may be a piece of Truestone."

Now at this we all lean in to get a closer look, for though we all hear how magical Truestone is, and also how valuable, none of us ever see it before. Topknot picks it up and squints at it, but then he drops it with a laugh.

"You are telling me that this lump is a piece of the famous magical Truestone?" he cries. "This has to be a gag, and you do it well: you really have me going there for a moment. But everyone knows that fake Truestone is one of the oldest cons in Prax, and seeing that this is with cheap stuff, mainly, that is what I will take it for, at best. In fact, I see fake Truestones that look better."

Now Avidius decides to horn in, for he too is looking

excited. "Not so fast," he says. "This does indeed look like a genuine piece that I once see, and everyone knows that Truestone does not look like much anyway. But there is an easy way to find out: take it to the Sages for an authentication.

"Mister," says Topknot, "if we can afford to pay the fees the Sages charge, why will we be adventuring? Besides, it will not be wise for us to let on that we have something that may be magical, for it comes out of the Rubble in what you may call an unorthodox way. If it is genuine and the Lunars get to hear of it, we are dead ducks."

"Well then," says Avidius, "why not let me take it to the Sages for you and pay the fee, for I can handle any problems with the government. Of course, I will be entitled to a fee for this service and to repay my costs: I think ten percent of the value will be reasonable. Indeed, I can even cast you a magic-finding spell that will show whether it is worthwhile bothering with at all, but for that I will have to charge extra."

"I have no wish to mistrust you," says Topknot, though the chances are that he is absolutely brimming with mistrust, "but it will take more than your word to persuade me into letting you go off with something that may be Truestone, though I appreciate your offers."

Just then the door opens again and in walks Griselda. She is looking fairly cheerful and gives us all a big hello. "What is coming off?" she asks. "Is someone demonstrating a trick?"

Topknot explains the whole deal to her and introduces Elsa and Brains as his associates, while Avidius introduces himself and expresses pleasure at meeting a living legend, which causes Griselda's eyes to narrow for a moment. She peers at the piece and says, "Well, I know Truestone can be red, so it is not impossible. But see here, if you are having problems making a deal, how about this? I will accompany Avidius to the Sages and make sure he does not pull anything. Of course, I will expect a little something for my trouble."

Topknot groans. "It figures that you will try and horn in on this, Griselda, but that seems fair."

"Not to me," cries Brains. "She will be watching him, but who will be watching her?"

Everyone is startled no little, to see this little guy coming on so strong, and Griselda glares at him and says, "Do you have the nerve to suggest that I will try a heist?" while Avidius says very huffily, "I can look after myself." But Brains seems quite unaffected by Griselda's glare. "You have quite a reputation here and there," he says, "and we have no more reason to trust your word than Avidius's. Where serious money is involved, people can easily lose such scruples as they may possess."

Griselda keeps up her glare for a second, and then she relaxes and laughs. "You must have plenty of moxie, to talk to me like that, but of course you are right, and I can see where you get your monicker of Brains. OK, why do you not come along to see fair play, and Avidius and I will leave our weapons here as proof of good faith."

"Hey!" cries Avidius. "How do I know you will not both jump me? I have no reason to trust any of you."

Well, it looks as if this one will run for a while,



but now Elsa intervenes. "Let us all keep calm," she says. "I see a way to protect everybody's interest," and she proceeds to outline a most complicated plan that I cannot make head or tail of, but the upshot of it is that Avidius is to use his spell on the item, to see if it is magical. So he gets out a pointed stone on a string and mutters over it, and right away the stone points to the pendant, so it figures to be magical some way, and everyone starts getting excited. Then Griselda takes a nice belt ornament for her fee and the rest goes back to Topknot's pouch, but this is handed over to Avidius who gives some nice golden Wheels from a money belt in exchange, and later I learn that this is in case the item turns out magical but dangerous or cursed or unusable, as magic items are apt to do more often than you will imagine. Then Brains picks up the pendant and off he goes with Griselda and Avidius, who leave their weapons on the bar. But no sooner are they on their way than Topknot and Elsa look at each other grinning.

"Here is to serious money!" says Elsa, and they clink their mugs and down the rest of their drinks and are off out the door with exceptional speed, and it seems to me that Topknot is chuckling. Naturally, this causes the whole bar to speculate no little and quite some, but although it is clear that something shifty is going on no one can figure it out. It is not long before Avidius and the others return, and we know this because we can hear Avidius howling even through the door. When he comes in he is looking completely stunned and is crying, "Worthless! I cannot understand what goes wrong with my spell!" and then he stops dead in his tracks when he sees that Topknot and Elsa are no longer with us. "Where do they go?" he says, and when it is explained that they leave hurriedly he acts like an idea strikes him all of a sudden and pulls out the pouch, which now proves to have in it, not the stuff we see before, but pebbles and strap-ends and suchlike trash.

"Cheated!" he yells, and he rounds on Brains and grabs him by the shirt front. "You are part of this," he cries, "and maybe I will take what I lose out of your hide," and he has him nearly off the floor and looks about to bean him.

"I know nothing of this," cries Brains, "can you not see that I am cheated too? I get no share of the dough you give them, and I doubt I ever will. I do not work with either before, but am new to this town, as anyone

here can testify."

Avidius seems to be half-convinced, but he continues to look most unhappy and does not let Brains go. Now Griselda, who is acting very calm during this, speaks up. "All is not lost, Avidius," she says in a soothing tone. "Sure, this is no Truestone, but it may still be valuable, and I am surprised that Topknot does not spot it, seeing as he claims to be a top-notch expert on trolls."

"How do you mean?" says Avidius, letting Brains drop.

"Well," says Griselda, "this looks very like an amulet I once see round the neck of a real high-up Troll priestess, and if you think about it, this chain is probably lead, and that is the trolls' sacred metal."

"Then how come that Sage can get no result from it?" says Avidius.

"There may be many explanations," says Griselda. "Maybe you should think, how far do you trust a Sage? Does he make his spell go wrong, for his own ends? You are a guy with experience, I can see, and you must know that such people are not always honest when items of such rarity and value are involved."

Anyone can see that Avidius gets quite a bang out of Griselda treating him as on her own level this way, and he says he will try his spell again, and sure enough, there goes the pointer, and he sighs with relief. "It must be as you state," he says. "That Sage is trying something on. But what is to be done? I never have dealings with trolls myself, and am not ready to start now."

"No problem," says Griselda, "I have the contacts. But I will have to charge you: it is no easy matter dealing with trolls, even when they know you, and I must spend a bit to meet anyone important. Naturally, I will want a percentage of any price, also, for my tip-off."

Avidius pulls a face. "I am already let in for a considerable loss," he says sourly. "Is this thing likely to be worth serious money, and how will they pay off anyway?"

"Why, with other goods, like what they may take in loot," says Griselda. "The Rubble trolls have many opportunities. As for value, I will guess that you may double your outlay, for such amulets are surely rare."

Avidius is obviously getting ready to agree, but now Brains snatches the pendant and says, "What about my end? So far I am cut out completely, yet this is all I have left of what I risk my life for as much as those two crossers."

Avidius rubs his chin and says, "I do not wish to be hard, but I now have a considerable investment in this item, and it is my spell that identifies it as magical. How about fifty to you and to Griselda, and if it is truly valuable you shall each have five percent?"

Brains does not look overjoyed at this offer, but he allows that it is the best deal he can get and hands over the pendant. Griselda sets a time for a meet-up in two days, and Avidius produces more cash for them, complaining of how this caper is eating up his savings. But he is there looking eager in two days' time, along with all the rest of us and others too, since the story gets out and generates no little interest. When Griselda steps in the whole joint goes quiet, but she is looking by no means cheerful, in fact she is looking



weary and most discouraged, and she tosses the pendant down in front of Avidius and says, "It means nothing to them," in a disgusted sort of voice.

"How can this be?" cries Avidius in astonishment.

"I do not know," says Griselda. "All I know is that they want no part of it, and I am too tuckered out to start discussing the point. I am up all night, and part of last night too, talking with trolls, so I reckon I earn my fee, and that is the last I want to hear of it," and before Avidius can say aye, yes, or no she is gone again.

"More money down the drain!" cries Avidius, and he sweeps up the pendant as if to smash it on the floor, but Brains grabs his arm.

"Hold on," he says. "I have a theory about this. Give me the pendant so that I can check it out, and if I am right I will split with you, right down the middle."

Avidius shrugs. "What do I have to lose?" he says, and hands it over.

Brains says he will be back that evening, and off he goes very fast. There is much speculation about his angle, and in the evening everyone is back and bets are being freely offered on the true nature of the pendant, while Lilina is going about looking very cheerful and saying that she may buy it herself as a good luck piece because of all the extra business it brings her. When Brains finally enters, the contrast with how Griselda is looking on the previous occasion is really quite marked, for he has a smile all over his face and a spring in his step. He says loudly, "It turns out as I figure; get me a drink and I will tell all."

So Avidius orders up a drink and Brains sits down and pulls out the pendant. "The explanation is quite simple," he says. "It is not the rock that is magical, but the chain; doubtless the Sage focusses on the rock, and for all I know the trolls do to, so they do not spot this. But the priest who checks this out for me identifies this chain as a matrix for that spell which bounces magic right back at persons who are throwing it at you, as long as your own power is strong enough; see the mark for it here," and he turns the chain over to show some odd squiggle.

Avidius peers, and then grins from ear to ear. "Now that is a really useful item," he says. "I will buy your share for two hundred."

"I believe you make a slip," says Brains, also grinning slightly. "Surely what you mean is two thousand."

Avidius gives a hollow kind of laugh. "I cannot raise that much in ready cash now," he says, "but at a pinch I can run to five hundred."

Brains shakes his head. "We better sell it and split the proceeds," he says. "I believe I know where to go," and he starts to get up. But Avidius cries, "Wait! I can scrape up a thousand if you will take goods, but that is my absolute limit, I swear by all the gods of adventurers."

Brains stands there a moment as if he is considering, and then he nods and says, "I cannot stand to see a man suffer," and they clap hands on the deal. Avidius cleans out his money belt, and throws in his jewellery and a stone-studded dagger, in fact he just about strips himself down, but he goes off with the pendant looking as pleased as if it is really Truestone. Brains scoops up all this stuff and turns to us and winks.

"I better be on my way," he says, "before people start looking for me. But there it is: you need foresight as well as superior brain power where serious money is involved," and he slips out before anyone can think up a good question to ask. Old Gil clears his throat, but he is still working up to say something when in come Topknot and Elsa hastily, looking very hot and bothered.

"Where is Brains?" cries Topknot. "That chiseller is putting one over on us, I believe."

"How so?" says Lilina.

"Why, that jewellery that we hook Avidius with is hired," he says, "and with our money, though it is Brains's idea. It costs a lot more than Avidius gives us. We have to hide out while Brains finishes with Avidius, as he has some plan for getting more out of him, and he will see to returning the jewellery for our dough, but we get tired of waiting and are just discovering that he leaves his lodgings and they have no idea where he goes."

Before he can say any more Griselda also comes in. "Does anyone here see Brains?" she says. "I am expecting to meet up with him."

"For what, Griselda?" says Elsa in a nasty sort of way. "Are you in this cross on us?"

"What cross?" says Griselda. "You get yours in the first part, do you not? We cannot work the rest if you are around. I set up Avidius with a story about it being a troll item, but that is just a come-on for the real con that it is a matrix, and I wish to see Brains to split the proceeds on that."

Then everybody starts talking at once, trying to explain different parts of the deal, and Griselda is looking from one to another, trying to make sense of it all, and suddenly she whirls and makes for the door, and Topknot and Elsa are quick to follow. Most of us follow also, to see what they are doing, and they are heading into Farmer's Quarter, so we keep going after them. But we are hardly started before Avidius comes panting up, yelling that the matrix is a dud and where is Brains? I explain that this is what Griselda and the rest aim to find out, and he joins in, and we reach People's Square a bit behind the others, but in time to see Brains crossing it at considerable speed, with Griselda only a few steps behind, and the rest nowhere. But at the gate into the Rubble is a whole bunch of guards headed up by Constable Jorjar himself, and they let Brains through, but of course Griselda has to stop. When we catch up with them she is asking why she cannot go through the gate, at least, for she has urgent business with Brains, and Constable Jorjar is grinning and shaking his head slowly.

"It is lucky for you that you do not have your little sticker out, Griselda," he says, "or I will be bound to take some action, but as it is I think I can overlook your evident wish to do him harm. But we cannot let you get at him, for he is a benefactor of the Empire and must be protected."

"Benefactor?" cries Avidius. "Why, he is nothing but a common swindler."

"Strong words," says Constable Jorjar, "but you may be entitled to use such language, for all I know. He certainly plays straight with us: we get a Reflection matrix at a very fair price, when you consider how rare such items are."

Avidius looks as if he will burst into tears. "Does it by any chance resemble this?" he says, holding out the pendant."

"Why, yes," says Constable Jorjar, peering at it and frowning a little. "In fact, I will say that they look identical. So he sells you a dud one, eh?"

Avidius groans, but says nothing more and stands there looking at his feet.

"I know there are two, and he keeps switching them," says Griselda in a thoughtful sort of way, "but I never suspect that one is genuine. He tells me that he has some kind of spell cast on it to make it seem magical. It sounds very plausible at the time."

"That is him, all right," says Topknot bitterly. "When you think about it, he puts all sorts of stuff over on us, and we accept it."

Avidius groans even louder. "So you all take me, one after the other," he says, glaring most fiercely at Topknot and Elsa and Griselda. "Well, I will not forget this, you may be sure, but I am not one to yell for the law in such matters, and I take some consolation from knowing that you all get taken too, even the famous Griselda." Then he turns and trudges off, moving as if he has boots full of lead. But Griselda takes no notice of him; she is looking after where Brains goes and shaking her head slightly.

"You know, that guy is really good," she says. "I wonder what his right name is; it seems to me I ought to hear of him before."

"Why, as to that," says Constable Jorjar, who is listening to all this with much interest, "I do not know his real name, but I understand that he is once widely known in these parts as Swiftly."

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ELDER SECRETS OF GLORANTHA

Published by Avalon Hill, price £16.50. Reviewed by Bruce L. Mason.

ELDER Secrets of Glorantha is the new biggy from Chaosium, detailing, mainly, the four major 'elder races' of Glorantha - the elves, trolls, dwarves and dragonewts. It's boxed, retails for \$20 (£16.50) and contains two books and a half-size map showing the major distributions of the elder races. The map is only marginally useful and the books are Avalon Hill's usual shoddy affairs which will probably fall to pieces before the year's out.

Having got the usual gripes off my chest, to ES itself. The concept is a bit of a mish-mash, featuring a lot of stuff that got left out when the planned *World of Glorantha* supplement got broken into different pieces. Some of it is old stuff updated, some of it is new, and some of it is new stuff reprinted. The *Secrets Book* is a pot-pourri of the old and downright weird and even has a page on Hero Questing. The *Elder Races* book gives details on the elves, dwarves and trolls in order to make them usable as player characters.

On to the *Secrets* book first. It is formed of many parts. The book starts with a very odd section called 'Inaccessible Glorantha' which gives brief descriptions of many of the most interesting areas of Glorantha and then warns GM's not to set campaigns in any of them. Given that this includes Pavis, Dagori Inkarth and so on I think that this statement should be taken with a grain of salt. Chaosium claims that this injunction is there because they intend to publish supplements dealing with all of these areas. Excuse me while I duck some flying pigs...

The rest of the book is less schizophrenic and is a sort of monsters and magic items manual. First off are the 'unique mysteries' of Glorantha, detailing places such as Hell's Crack and Harajallenburg - the walking fort. It's classic Chaosium stuff with that wonderful, warped Californian concept of weirdness. Each one of these mysteries has enough about it to create a campaign around.

Next we get the secrets of Dragonkind. This is basically reprinted stuff from *Wyrms Footnotes* with some extra goodies about the important draconic NPC's in Glorantha. All neat stuff. The 'Monsters and Terrors' section provides various messy ways to slaughter player-characters. The monsters function as addenda to the *Glorantha Bestiary* and includes new species such as the Nasobeme, some sort of creature that bounces along on its *four* noses. Weird, man. The terrors are individual monsters that are there to gross out the players. Our old friend the Crimson Bat is back, and boy is it tough these days. CON 1,200. Apparently it has 1,640 FP's though what GM would be mad enough to dock its FP's I don't know. 'OK. End of the melee round. Every one lose an fp. Crimson Bat loses one too.' We also get stats for the Hydra of Dragon Pass, Cwim (don't ask) and the Mother of Monsters! You want gross, you got it. At long last RQ can have its own version of Godzilla versus the Smog Monster!

More good stuff on the magical geology of Glorantha that at last gives the RQ3 versions of rune metals, magic crystals and truestone. The book is finished off with a star map of the heavens and a look at the weather patterns. Finally on the last page we have the secrets of Hero Questing. Bad news I'm afraid as it does no more than tell us, yet again, that Arkat discovered comparative Hero Questing and that it's time for the Hero Wars. Worst kept secret in Glorantha these days.

About half of the *Elder Secrets* book is taken up with descriptions of the elves, dwarves and trolls. Each species is presented in a set formula. The mythical and historical past is given. The current regions of origin listed (in the same way as done in *Glorantha: Genertela*) and various boxed items deal with interesting bits on Jrusteli Isles. Next the mechanics of creating player-characters are given as well as suggestions for how to create workable characters. finally the rune cult of the species is

presented (ie Mostal, Aldrya, and Kyger Litor) in the 'extended' format.

The information about the Mostali is reworked from the old *Different Worlds* article. They were an excellent satire and age has improved it. The paragraph about Mostali procreation is not to be missed. Character generation allows for the play of apostate, heretic or orthodox Mostali. It is presented in such a way that I can see Mostali becoming popular PC's for a while because they are certainly a challenge. The cult of Mostal includes some new spells not



The Crimson Baaa...ah! hah, hah!

seen in *Gods of Glorantha* and hints that these are really only a partial listing.

The Aldryami are still, basically, boring. There's some suitably weird stuff about elven sexuality, but on the whole the work is pedestrian. It's not as hilariously satirical as the dwarven write-up nor is it inventively appealing as the trolls. The character generation reflects this, being good at churning out elves with high bow skills and a certain lack of personality. The write-up of Aldrya has changed little since *Cults of Prax* and contains nothing that wasn't in *Gods of Glorantha*.

The Troll write-up has been lifted

wholesale from *Trollpak* with a few new bits of boxed text. The character generation system is the same one with a paragraph moved. The cult of Kyger Litor has just been from one box to the other. This is the third time in a row that the extended Kyger Litor write-up has been put in a supplement. It may be good, but it's not that good.

The rest of the book consists of descriptions of nineteen of the minor elder races (mermen have been left out). The characteristics aren't given, they're in the *Glorantha Bestiary*, but brief descriptions are given of the social structures of the creatures as well as information on how to create player characters. This is about as in depth as the descriptions in the *Deluxe Creatures Book*.

The best bits in this part are the cult write-ups of Cacodemon and The Bloody Tusk and Chaosium really went to town on these. In keeping with the whole RQ3 ethos Cacodemon has been significantly upgraded. It turns out that all those RQ2 ogres weren't really summoning the Big C after all, just a type of lesser demon known as a fiend, of which Cacodemon controls several dozen. One of these fiends should be able to sorely trouble a party of rune-levels. The Bloody Cut must have been written the last time Chaosium got a tax bill, cause boy is it sadistic. Let's hope that Moral Majority don't see this one. The 'Bloody Cut' itself is a new skill, the opposite of the 'Peaceful Cut', designed to cause the most painful death possible. Now you can see why people really do hate the Tusk Riders! Unfortunately the write-up of Thed, mentioned earlier in the book, doesn't turn up.

The book finishes with various scenario outlines, each featuring one of the elder races mentioned in the book. They're workmanlike rather than inspiring, though the lost-dwarves mini-campaign has some potential and some of the vignettes have their moments.

Overall this set is excellent. If you missed out on the RQ2 supplements of many moons ago you're in for a real treat as Glorantha is still, in my opinion, the best campaign world ever published. If you do have the originals, then unless you've already made up your own versions

of the above and would find it hopelessly contradictory, you still can't afford to be without it. Now, at long last, the expansion of Gloranthan knowledge promised to us with the release of RQ3 has been delivered.

There are some gripes. The books are riddled with typos and this habit of wholesale repetition of previous supplements, primarily the troll stuff, gets annoying. I hope I don't have to pay for anymore copies of the Kyger Litor cult. This much I can cope with but Mr. Dobyski's illustrations are another matter. It's not just that they're bad, in fact it's some of the most pathetic attempts at drawing that I've ever had to pay money for in my

life - his tusk-riders were obviously farmed out to his 10 year old son. He has some talent at drawing human figures, but that's about it. So far he has disgraced *Troll Gods* and now *Elder Secrets*, I hope Avalon Hill have nothing further to do with him.

In summary, if you run Glorantha then beg, borrow or buy a copy of this. Stick blank paper over the illos and correct the typos and you'll have a supplement almost up to the standard of *Glorantha: Genertala* - and that's a high standard. Now a little less background and a lot more scenarios might not go amiss. Hmm... wonder if I can persuade Chaosium to let me have mine as a review copy...

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Australian Sales Director: Michael O'Brien

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Cover Art: Ralph Horsley

Maps: Walter Moore

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Authors: Oliver Dickinson, Mark Holsworth, Bruce L. Mason, Michael O'Brien, Jon Quaife & Greg Stafford

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Addresses:

Please note the new editorial address (though I can still be contacted at the old one).

David Hall: 21 Stephenson Court, Osborne Street, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 1TN, England.

Michael O'Brien: 2/33 Carween Avenue, Mitcham 3132, Victoria, Australia.

David Gadbois: 2600 Rio Grande, Austin, TX 78705, USA.

Lars-Roger Moe: Gjerdhaugen 2, 8050 Tverlandet, Norway.

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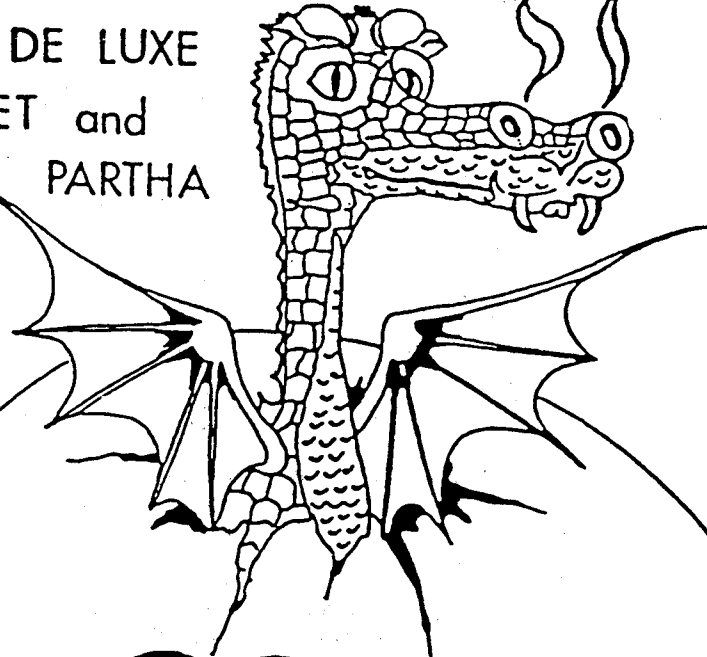
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