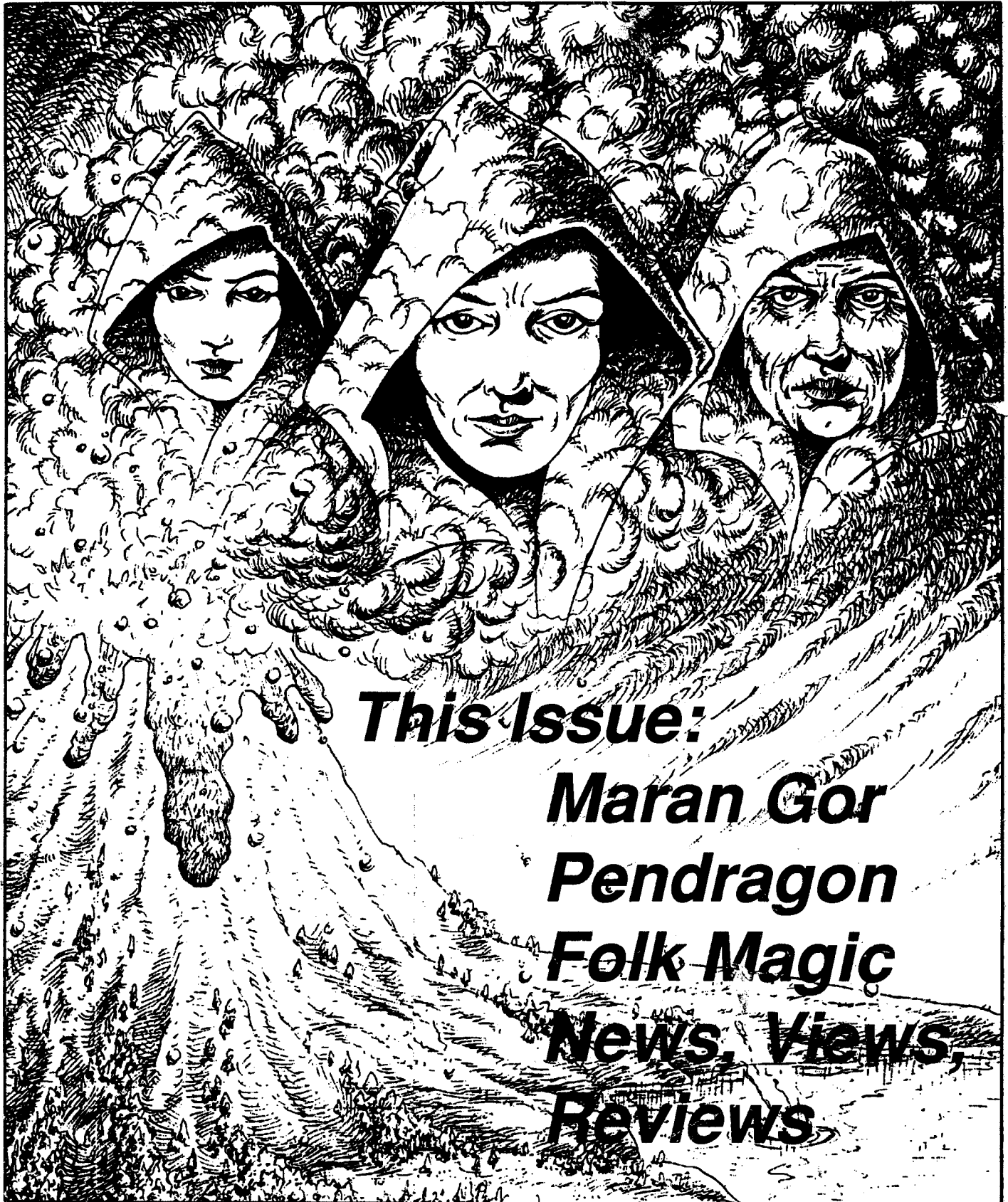


Tales of the Reaching Moon

The RuneQuest™ Magazine

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This Issue:

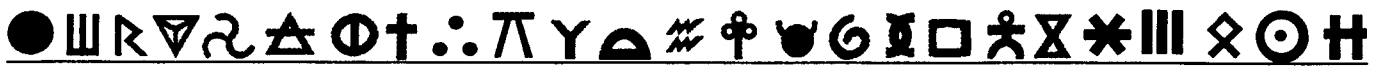
Maran Gor

Pendragon

Folk Magic

News, Views,

Reviews



Tales of The Reaching Moon

The RuneQuest™ Magazine

Tales of the Reaching Moon is an amateur magazine dedicated to the role-playing game RuneQuest and the world of Glorantha. The contents are copyright the original authors and artists, and material may only be reproduced with their permission.

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Contributions

Contributions are gratefully received, especially artwork. All written contributions should be doubled spaced and typed. Contributions on floppy disc will be given preferential treatment! I can accept both IBM 3.5" and 5.25" discs, in ASCII, Wordperfect 5.0 or Word for Windows format (if anyone can tell me how to convert Apple discs then I'll accept these too!). Please remember to give full credit to all of your sources. For artwork please don't send originals by normal post, good photocopies are preferred. As ever, the generous reward for publication is a FREE copy of the issue!

EDICT

Welcome to issue six, apologies are in order for it being late. Unfortunately Steve and myself have had a lot of pressures recently at our respective works, and the preparations for Convulsion '92 are also taking up an increasing amount of time. Remember, this is an amateur fanzine, and fanzines never come out on time!

Pendragon

I did mention in Squawkings, that I was planning to feature some Pendragon articles. Unfortunately I got rather a poor response to my requests for articles, so it has gone on hold for the moment. I am still looking for articles. In the meantime I would recommend Savage Mountains as an excellent source for ideas on Sartar!!

Avalon Hill Staff Changes

The Good News: Avalon Hill are taking on Ken Rolston (co-author of Pavis and Big Rubble) as editor for RuneQuest. He will not be actually starting work until January 1992, however.

The Other News: Nick Atlas has left AH to pursue his career with another games company, GDW. It is rumoured that the parting was less than amicable...

RQ Releases

The next release will be Sun County, by our own MOB. The estimate for the publication of this was September/October, although the recent staff changes at AH will probably push this back until next year. It includes the Garhound Contest, Shield Push, the cult of Yelmialio and the Sun Dome Temple.

RQ4. Avalon Hill are planning a new revised edition of the rules, to be produced in a perfect bound books. Apparently this will be followed by a complete re-issue of the whole line.

Harmast Saga. Greg Stafford is writing the first part of a Gloranthan novel based around the exploits of Arkat.

Next week in Tales...

Issue seven is coming along nicely and promises to be decent taster to Heroquesting. It will have guidance on a DIY ruleset, advice on writing quests, as many examples of Heroquests as I can find, and maybe a sip or two from Daliath's Well of Wisdom.

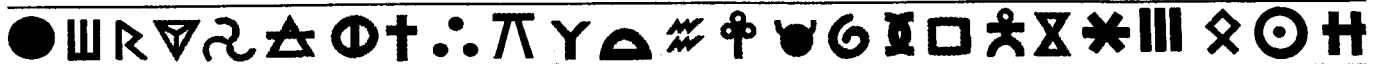
Issue eight is still a Chaos Feature (see page 42). Inside, Jon Quaife will present a Coven of Five deadly demons, we've got the Cult of the Crimson Bat, the lowdown on Broos, and much more we dare not announce as yet...

Issue nine will be a tidy-up issue with many articles we couldn't fit in elsewhere. One of these will be Warhamster: Mass Battle rules for RuneQuest, by Sandy Petersen.

Our future plans are still up in the air. Ideas include Malkioni, Nochet City, Duck, and Grazelander special issues. Let us know what you'd like!

Another German RuneQuest Convention

Following on the success of the convention this year, another is planned to be held in Bremen from the 6th-8th June 1992.



For details contact: Ingo Tschinke, Schevemoorer Landstr. 33, 2800 Bremen 44.

At the last convention it was decided to start up a German fanzine, entitled Free INT. Contact Lutz Reimer-Rawcliffe (address opposite) or Ingo for details.

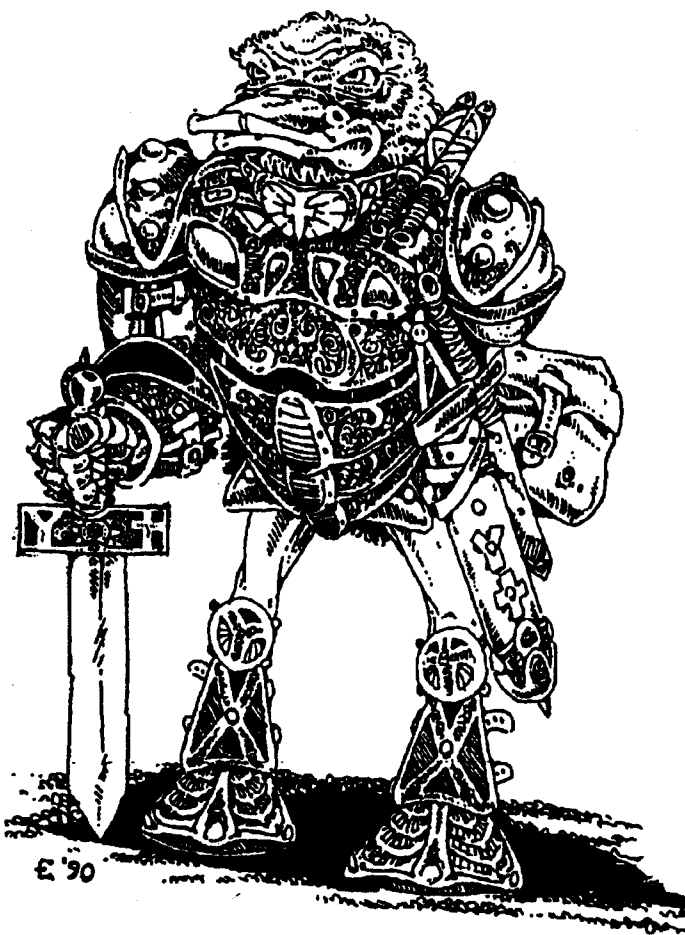
Convulsion '92, Leicester, 24th-27th July 1992.

This is now 33% full, with almost 50 places filled, so if you're coming along then we advise you book soon! The guest of honour is Greg Stafford, and if we can get enough cash and games donations into the Etyries Fund, we hope to invite Sandy Petersen over as well.

Already in our pile of goodies for the auction are original copies of Wyrms Footnotes 4-6 & 9-14, Borderlands, Griffin Mountain, Questworld and Cults of Prax. We're not sure yet what goodies Greg will be bringing, but he has mentioned the script for the RuneQuest movie!

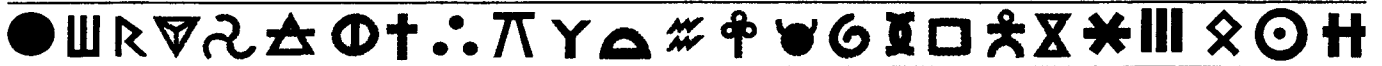
Stamps and Things

Dear Punters. a heartfelt plea to all those of you who write in for copies of *Squawkings*, or other information. DO NOT FORGET THE S.S.A.E. It may not seem like much to you, but it makes a difference to us, so in future unaccompanied letters are unlikely to receive a reply. 'Nuff said.



Contents

- 3 HOLIDAY GLORANTHA**
THREE RIBBONS AND FIVE CHAMBERS
Meet Sir Palantinides - scholar, visionary or just looney?
- 7 SARTAR TRIBES MAP**
- 8 7 FOODS**
Pig out with our Gloranthan Good Food Guide.
- 10 ONE VISION**
How to give your game that 'primitive feel'. Naked savages, primitive rites, music and drugs. Love it.
- 12 THE CULT OF MARAN GOR**
The official long RQ3 cult writeup, previously unpublished.
- 15 THE BROKEN EARTH**
Earth rune cults in third age Genertela.
- 18 FRENCH RUNEQUEST**
A Review by MOB. Read it and weep.
- 19 FOLK MAGIC**
See what people *really* use magic for in Glorantha.
- 21 PENDRAGON IN GLORANTHA**
Love Glorantha, hate RQ3? This Tales pull out section shows you how to use the Pendragon rule system in Dragon Pass.
- 22 PENDRAGON PASS**
Culture and Background information.
- 25 RUNEDRAGON**
Combat and Weapons system.
- 28 PENDRAGON PASS CHARACTER SHEET**
Feel free to copy and use this.
- 30 INSPIRATION**
Where does Greg Stafford get his ideas? - an unusual answer.
- 32 CORWENS SAGA**
The Lunars come to Greydog Village in a story from the Tales house campaign.
- 34 THE CHRONICLES OF KHAFRE-MENES**
The author of Daughters of Darkness talks about the creation of the latest AH supplement.
- 36 JAXARTE WHYDED**
JAXARTE AND THE BISON KHAN
Our Scribe meets the Nomads of Prax, and regrets it.
- 40 ZINES SEEN**
Zines from all around the world (well, Europe anyway).
- 41 LETTERS**
Further abuse from you, our loyal readers.
- 43 DART COMPETITIONS**
A game of arrows with the the Lunar Nobility.
- 44 CARVING UP CARVER**
Hack and slash in downtown Pavis.



Tales of The Reaching Moon, in association with Thunderbreath Delicatessens inc, are pleased to bring you Glorantha's

Seven favourite foods

Compiled by Tom Duttar

Sasqui

Tarshites know it as 'sasqui' or 'yellowsoup'; the Sartarites as 'sacsquech Arkat' - the soup that turned Arkat yellow. On occasions of religious import tomatoes are added to the pot to symbolize the blood of the Gods. (The Sartarites make a spicy tomato preserve which can be used all year round.)

There is a tale dating back to the time of the Great Hunger when Malawi Jabat searched Glorantha for the Uncle-with-an-Answer:

"The Benevolent One came to Mayfly in the land that is Tarsh. At the village centre he met a small boy weeping. 'What troubles a beautiful spirit?' asked the Great Sage.

'My father is making sasqui.'

'Ah! I too remember the mornings when the smell of sasqui woke me. Even I, whose palate is as broad as a bullock's back, could not bear the anger of a dish so sharp,' consoled the taster of rumoured fruits.

'No sir, you misunderstand. Last night I ate the tomatoes and my father will soon find out.'"

If prepared correctly sasqui can have immense aphrodisiac qualities. Player characters visiting villages in Tarsh should take care when offered the dish by the head of any household - it probably means he is looking to marry-off a daughter. Intimate courting of the daughter will be taken as consent to wedlock; family members will insist the contract is honoured.

Waymole

"To eat and drink immoderate quantities of ordinary food and liquor is to overburden nature." So begins Anchoritenuus in 'Observations - Is Lottera, (the Belly God).' The author details over 600 foodstuffs that he finds morally objectionable and a further 200 that he is unsure about. The dish he finds most offensive is Waymole - a fruit salad the main ingredient of which is the Waymole berry: a cherry-like creation that oozes a creamy pulp when pressed between the lips (firmly). Waymole is traditionally soaked in syrup and brandy then flambéd and sipped from a Flamecup. True Waymole is the preserve of the rich, however, the Sartarites have a watered down version where the fruits are soaked in a tea-like beverage.

Waymole is typically served after a meal of great fat: mutton, duck or even red fish. Its effect is one of pure indulgence.

Kalomin

Kalomin is a light herbaceous tea brewed from the leaves of the Carciomile bush found in Esrolia and across Wenelia. Kalomin is best served cool with an accompaniment of biscuits. Its ability to calm the

nerves is renowned and for this reason it is served at conferences. Malawi Jabat, it is reported, once drank a shield full of Kalomin as part of a compromise. He failed to move from the spot for six weeks. Kalomin should not be drunk on top of alcohol. Depending on the quantity consumed the effect is similar to the Befuddle spell lasting one or two hours after the last cup was drunk.

Lunar Gruel

There's a gruel among gruels whose ingredients are said to consist of dinosaur's heart, eagle's blood and the seed from a thousand ploughed fields. The gruel was the creation of a quartermaster in the Lunar army and for the last 100 years Lunar Heartland soldiers have broken their fast on it. The secrecy surrounding the dish and its ingredients has been translated into a Sartarite joke:-

Q: What's the first thing a Lunar soldier puts on in the morning?

A: A blindfold.

There have been many attempts to raid Lunar storehouses to get the recipe and ingredients of the gruel. One successful attempt by an Issaries initiate named Phogg resulted in a mix of gargantuan proportions. Phogg has never been seen in his home town of Pavis since. Reports of him endlessly running up and down the Loskalmi coast are unsubstantiated.

Eaten regularly over a period of months, the gruel endows the consumer with additional powers of endurance. Individual referees should attach Fatigue points to suit. Often eaters may develop insomnia.



"Sasqui...if prepared correctly...can have immense aphrodisiac qualities"



Maran Gor

The Earth Shaker

Mythos and History

In the sunshine of Myth, when all was still peaceful, the goddess Asrelia gave birth to two daughters. One was named Ernalda and the other was called Maran. Both were generous and kind, and both had many friends in God-time. They were widely courted by many gods, but Maran took no husband or lover, preferring a chaste path. When the troubles of the Godwar came upon her family, she used mighty oaths and promises and took the geas of trading her mating for more terrible abilities. The title of Gor was added to her name after that.

Thus, Ernalda became the much loved and fertile goddess who was fought over by the Rival Brothers (Orlanth and Yelm), while Maran Gor became a figure of fear and awe. Throughout time and legends these sisters have maintained a close relationship.

The cult of the Earth Shaker has waned considerably since the Dawning, but in certain isolated spots she is still highly revered. After death, the faithful go to the paradise under the earth where Ty Kora Tek tends them until their rebirth. Their corpses are buried or hidden in natural caverns or cracks.

Maran Gor's runes are those of Malign Earth, Death, and Disorder.

Cult Ecology

Maran Gor is the goddess of the Earthquake. She represents the dark side of the Earth Mother, even as Ernalda represents the benevolent side. She is worshipped now only by those who seek the carnage which is her most precious gift.

Her cult is tiny, and its outlook is subsumed by that of the dominant Ernalda cult. The cultists are a grim bunch who befriend only their fellow earth cultists. Theirs is a crude, but fulfilling, religion which is well-suited only for the harshest lifestyles.

Her Holy Days fall upon the Clayday of each Disorder week. Her High Holy Day is on the Clayday of Death week in Dark season, when her taking of the title of Gor is commemorated.

The Cult in the World

The Earth Shaker's priestesses have only that social and political power which they can wrest through their personal strength. In the few lands she is the dominant religion, this rule by strength persists, and the strongest priestesses rule in a special council.

The Earth Shaker is recognized through much of the world. She is especially important in Dragon Pass, where an entire tribe of wild robbers worship her; and in Kimos, where one strong faction of humans exploits her powers to withstand and shake down the strongholds of her Gorger enemies.

In the rare and grim areas where she is worshiped for herself, her temples may be of any size. More commonly, her cult consists of shrines within the temples of her sister gods. Shrines to Maran Gor teach Blast Earth.

Great Temples are carefully organized. The High Priestess of the cult is always attended by 47 male and female cannibal virgins who are also acolytes. She also rules a council made up of each Maran Gor priestess in the temple plus one representative from each of the cults of the local grain goddess; Ty Kora Tek, Voria, and Babeester Gor, plus three representatives each from the cults of



Maran Gor Cultist

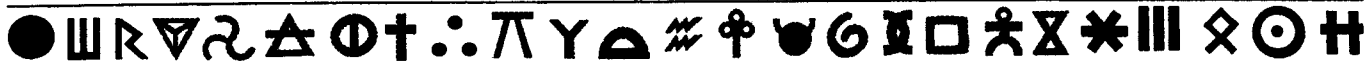
Asrelia and Ernalda. Decisions are made by council vote. Each member of the council has one vote for each point of reusable Rune magic she possesses. The High Priestess has the right to permanently expel any Maran Gor priestess from the temple and council at any time for any cause.

Smaller temples have a progressively less complete organization, down to shrines, with only a single acolyte or priestess.

Initiate Membership

A candidate for initiation is automatically accepted if one of her parents was an initiate. If this is not the case, she must pass the standard initiation tests and requirements. In either case she must sacrifice a point of POW.

SKILLS: Ceremony, Climb, Scan, Throw, Weapon Attack.



Initiates have all normal requirements and restrictions, and receive all the usual benefits. They must swear to obey their temple's High Priestess unto death. They may not directly till the soil or herd beasts for their livelihood, and must eat raw meat, fish or fowl at least once a season.

SPIRIT MAGIC: Befuddle, Bladesharp, Bludgeon, Disrupt, Dullblade, Demoralise, Heal, Ironhand, Strength, Vigor.

Acolyte Membership

Acolytes of the Earth Shaker must fulfill all the normal requirements for priesthood. A male may become an acolyte, if he is also a eunuch or becomes one for that purpose. Female acolytes for the Earth Shaker need not be celibate, but may not marry. They must divorce any current husband when they take their acolyte vows. Any sons born to a female acolyte must be sacrificed. Daughters born must be dedicated to the service of Maran Gor or Babeester Gor.

Otherwise, they are as per normal acolytes.

Rune Priestess Membership

Rune Priestesses are tyrants, feared as much as they are obeyed by their initiates. They have given up much to gain their power, and can never forget this. The requirements for acceptance into priestesshood are standard, plus the candidate must be an unmarried woman. Once ordained, priestesses must be celibate, trading the joys of love for the most impressive magic available to any earth cult. They must fulfill normal priestly functions and have normal priestly benefits.

COMMON DIVINE MAGIC: all

SPECIAL DIVINE MAGIC: Blast Earth, Command Gnome, Command Dinosaur, Create Fissure, Shake Earth.

Subcults

Spirits of Retribution

Members who violate cult beliefs or leave the religion are cursed by a dire spirit named Hote. Hote never appears to the culprit, but follows her around for a period of time varying with the seriousness of the crime. Whenever the traitor attempts to cast a Healing spell of any sort (whether spirit magic, divine, or sorcery) Hote devours the spell and prevents its success. Initiates are normally only cursed for a season. Offending acolytes are usually cursed at least a year. Extremely vile offenders may be cursed for life.

Priestesses and high priestesses who grievously offend their goddess are not cursed by Hote. Instead, they are visited by the fury named Ueh Ziv. This spirit causes the earth to become a deadly foe of the priestess. Whenever the priestess's skin or hair touches bare soil, a point of POW is instantly drained from her, and she continues to lose POW at the rate of one point per melee round until she ends the contact.

Associated Cults

Asrelia

The priestesses of Asrelia wield power in enormous disproportion to their scarcity among the worshippers of the Earth Shaker. She teaches Hide Wealth.

Babeester Gor

Maran Gor's niece is more like Maran Gor than any other deity, although her cult functions differ. She too has taken upon herself the

terrible name of Gor, and she provides her aunt with the spell of Shield.

Ernalda

Ernalda is the most important of the Earth Goddesses, and even in the lands where Maran Gor has supreme power, many of the people worship Ernalda. She gives Maran Gor her Earthpower spell.



Maran Gor Priestess



Special Divine Spells for Maran Gor

Blast Earth

1 point

ranged, instant, nonstackable, reusable

This spell is cast upon an area of land geometrically proportionate to the number of magic points expended. One magic point affects one square metre, two magic points affect four square metres, and so on. No plants within the area blasted may flower or bear fruit for a full year.

Create Fissure

1 point

ranged, instant, stackable, reusable

This spell opens up a chasm five metres long, one metre wide, and three metres deep for each point in the spell. If the crack is cast to undermine a wall or similar structure, the structure loses 1D6 armour points per point in the spell. If the wall is reduced to 0 armour points, it collapses where it has been undermined. Structural armour points are found in the *Armour Points for Objects* table on page 83 of the *RuneQuest Player's Book*.

If the chasm is formed underneath a target, he falls into it, taking 1D6 falling damage per 3 metres depth of the crack. A successful DEX x 3 roll allows the target to avoid the fall.

Shake Earth

1 point

ranged, temporal, stackable, reusable

This spell has two variables: magic points are used to determine size of the area affected, and the number of points stacked in the spell determines the severity of the result.

The spell affects an area of land geometrically proportionate to the number of magic points expended. One magic point covers one square metre, two magic points cover four square metres, and so on.

All characters within the area have 5 percentiles per point of Shake Earth subtracted from all Agility skills and DEX rolls. Each round, anyone standing up must succeed in a DEX x 5 roll on 1D100 or fall down. Other results of the quake, such as toppling trees, avalanches etc. are up to the gamemaster.

Ty Kora Tek

Maran Gor's Aunt tends the dead of the cult, and gives the spell of Bless Grave to Maran Gor.

Voria

The goddess of children and springtime might seem to have little to do with the Earthshaker, but her cult is protected from the dangerous outside world by such as Maran Gor's cultists. She gives those cultists the spell of Invigorate.

Miscellaneous Notes

The Tarsh Exiles

In Dragon Pass, Maran Gor's cult is highly revered because of an ancient holy place found there. The Shaker's Temple is where Maran Gor stood to shake down the armies of the Devil when he invaded against her sister, Ernalda, and that place is always safe for any of her worshippers. The High Priestess of the earthquake goddess here is so ponderous that she travels only in a cart drawn by six oxen.

Kimos

The Earth Shaker worshippers of Kimos are well organised and use their talents to great advantage in the never ending battles of the war-torn peninsula of Kimos. The wars between humans and gorgers are fought by earthquake, flood, and volcano, rather than by paltry troops of armed soldiers. Here, the Earth Shakers have found a vital niche.

This is the official cult writeup by Greg Stafford and Sandy Petersen, and is copyright the original authors 1991.



Greg Stafford
Sandy Petersen



(XXIX 12-70) Old Kralori proverb: The man with feet sweeps for the man who has none. (XXIX 12-71) "Good principles and feelings are extinguished in him. He loves himself, his own convenience and his pleasures. He distrusts everyone, suffers from extreme weakness of mind, and is tyrannised over by constant fear of death." Attributed to Dagius Furius, Chief of Lunar Intelligence, describing King Moirades of Tarsh. (XXIX 12-72) A Pentian work of note is A Captive of the Teetons, an apparently true story by one Janus Sardinus, a Lunar common soldier who was held for ransom by a pentian tribe. He was released after a year, his family paying a ransom of several horses. Sardinus writes of witnessing human sacrifice (indeed, the sacrifice of his commander and his fellow troopers - why the Teetons chose to spare Sardinus is not explained), and the summoning of the demon Kazamed by the shaman Pintoff, a man so hideous that he might easily be mistaken for a broo, yet is apparently one of the major chieftains of Pent. There are other works, which I may describe in a future entry. Thredbo the Traveller, Temple Cartographer. (XXIX 12-73) Never wager "tails" on the flip of a Salilgori coin, for the Salilgori had two kings. (XXIX 12-74) It is said that two people in the whole of Ralios know of every matter which moves therein. One is Suriana Ravenwing, God-Queen of Tanisor, who in forty years of ruling has not grown old: her agents are in the hall of every lord and the fane of every temple. The other, in the northern city of Rilche, is the high priest of their minstrel-hero and founder, Amaril: he knows the name of every wandering minstrel and needs no other spy. (XXIX 12-75) The Humakti temples of Ralios are unusual, even heretical, in that they often use ravens as familiars, rather than binding spirits into their swords as we do. (XXIX 12-76) For those wishing to gain information on the complex subject of ear-markings or seeking a fair price for good specimens of Uz ears (must have details of where and when taken), see Arasmath Quill, Sage of Lhankor Mhy in the city of Pavis-outside-the-wall. A marginal note by Saryte Lekile, Grey Sage: Some few weeks after Arasmath Quill let it be known that he sought Uz ears for study, the following note was thrown over the wall into new Pavis: "have recently started collection of Sage ears, mainly from Pavis area. Seek scholars interested in contributing to the advancement of knowledge. Klegar Darkhide, Death Lord of Zorak Zoran. And who says troll humour lacks subtlety."

The Voice of The Goddess

What The Earth Sister Says



Where did the world come from?

From formlessness came Earth, the first firm footing.

Where do we come from?

From Earth the Mother were born all the mothers of the peoples and the beasts. From them all are descended.

Why do we die?

In the beginning all followed the cycles of Nature in harmony, but the squabbling of the gods spoilt everything. Death the spoiling is one of those cycles, and it cannot fully be mended.

What happens when we die?

Our souls are taken to the bosom of Ga, guarded by Ty Kora Tek, to await rebirth.

Why are we here?

To enjoy lives in harmony, after the nature of the goddess, letting our sisterhood be a firm foundation for others less fortunate than ourselves, just as the Earth is our firm footing.

How do we do magic?

By domesticating the simple spirits of the world as we do the beasts, by the grace of our goddess, and by inward discipline and harmony. All the world is magical, and it is all the bounty of Earth.

What is the truth about . . .

. . .Aldrya?

Lost sister of Earth, she has relied on her son and dwindled. Pity her peoples.

. . .Chaos?

The old formlessness before Earth, it has no place in the Goddess. Beware it.

. . .the Lunar Goddess?

She thinks to be our sister, but deals with the world through her masculine nature. Her sisterhood is incomplete. Guide her.

. . .Kyger Litor?

Our elder sister in darkness has dwindled because she too relies on her sons and not her daughters. Scorn the men of darkness, unruly and benighted.

. . .Magasta?

The deep waters are but half-formed from out of Chaos. Beware the grim sea folk.

. . .Monotheists?

Scornful of the bounty of life, these men assert their arrogance and indulge the pettinesses of their gender on their helpless folk and lands. Help open their eyes, if they will let; resist them otherwise.

. . .Mostal?

A son of Earth who overdoes his firmness. Our goddess has not made the mistake of relying upon his aid. Distrust the stone peoples.

. . .Pamalt?

All the baubles and vanities of man, this god of savages who tries to enslave our sister Nyanka. Let his folk beg our help when they have ruined themselves.

. . .Spirits?

The folk and the beasts of the other world. From those we domesticate, we learn some magic.

Earth-sister Cults

The following deities or aspects of deities form the primary members of the pantheon of this culture. Where a cult has been modified from Gods of Glorantha, or is completely new, it will be given below. Many of the modifications include associations with other cults and spells thus received. For example, in this pantheon, Yelm is the healer cult, and Orlanth receives no spells from the Lightbringer Chalana Arroy.

Earth Gods

Argan Argar, Asrelia, Babeester Gor, City (or town) Gods, Dendara, Ernalda, Gorgorma, Hunter, Maran Gor, Nyanka, Orlanth Thunderous, Pelora, River Gods, Thief Gods, Ty Kora Tek, Uleria, Voria, Yelm Teacher.

Argan Argar, the trade cult of the region

As husband of Ernalda, he is darkness aspects are not important, and the cult receives no spells manipulating darkness. The only special Runespells he offers are Safe, and Enchant Lead, and the associate spell of Restore Health CON from Ernalda. In exchange, he offers Safe for Ernalda.

Gorgorma

Here associated with the other cults of Dust (or Malign Earth, the rune of a filled square). She offers them all the use of Second Mouth, and receives Great Parry, Blast Earth and Bless Grave in return.

Hunter

Women follow a cult reminiscent of Artemis of the Greeks. Some men follow Odayla.

Nyanka, Goddess of childbearing and clear waters

Although more familiar as a Pamaltelan deity, this goddess fulfils a significant part of the life of any culture, and has no known Gener-telan equivalent. Her runes are Life Harmony and Water. Her shrines teach Birthing. Her initiates must be women, and her cult skills are Craft/Midwifery, First Air, World Lore, Swimming.

Spirit Magic: Detect Pregnancy, Detect Water, Menstruate, Strength, Vigour.

Common Rune Magic: Dismiss Magic, Divination, Excommuni-cation, Find Water, Heal Wound, Mindlink, Sanctify, Soul Sight, Spellteaching, Spirit Block, Warding, Worship Nyanka.

Special Rune Magic: Absorption, Birthing, Clear Water, Couvade (as for Xiola Umbar), Restore Health [STR, CON], Shield, Transfer Pregnancy.

Associate spells: from Dendara, Heal Body, from Gorgorma, Second Mouth, from Uleria, Reproduce.

Orlanth Thunderous

A simplified cult with only a simple priest status and no wind lords.

Special Divine Spells for Earth Cults

Birthing (Nyanka) 1 point
stackable, reusable, lasts until labour ends.

Allows safe and painless delivery. If the birth is from the original mother, one point suffices, otherwise as many points as points of Transfer Pregnancy necessary to transfer the pregnancy to the individual giving birth. Males give birth through the navel. Available to Dendara, Ernalda and Uleria.

Clear Water (Nyanka) 1 point
stackable, reusable, instant

Each point clears all impurities from one cubic metre of water.

Transfer Pregnancy (Nyanka)
Variable stackable, reusable, instant.

One point will transfer a pregnancy between females of the same species. Add an extra point for each of the following cases: the target is a different species, either participant is of fixed INT, either participant is male.

Rain (Heler) 2 point
reusable

Causes maximum precipitation to occur from the current cloud cover from the point of casting to the horizon. The spell ceases as the cloud moves out of the area, and is replaced by new cloud, unaffected by the spell.

Special Earth Cult Spirit Spells

Menstruate (Nyanka) 2 point
Ceremony

Affects one willing female of a Man-rune race, causing menstruation to begin. Used during the first season of pregnancy, it will affect abortion. This spell is available to all Dust-rune cults.

Contest Disease (Yelm Teacher) 2 point
Ceremony

This spell has the same effect as the Fight Disease Runespell⁵

It shares aspects of the associated cults of Voriof (sheep), Heler (rain) and Barntar (plough).⁴ Initiates are usually male, but may be female. Shrines teach Cloud Call. Skills required are Craft/Ploughing, Craft/Shepherd, Weather Lore, Orate.

Spirit Magic: Detect Sheep, Extinguish, Repair, Strength.

Rune Magic: All common spells, Cloud Call, Cloud Clear, Decrease Wind, Increase Wind, Thunderbolt.

Associate spells: From Barntar, Command Bull, from Ernalda, Restore Health STR (and loans Cloud Call in exchange), from Heler, Rain, and from Voriof, Command Sheep.



Yelm Teacher

Another cult with only a simple priesthood in this culture, compared with the complex one which it displays when it is the primary cult of the culture.

Only men whose fathers were in the cult may join it. Shrines teach Cloud Clear. Cult skills are First Aid, Play Harp, Ride Horse and one of Music Lore, Treat Poison or Treat Disease.

Spirit Magic: Contest disease, Heal, Light

Runespells: All common, Command Eagle, Command Hawk, Command Horse, Fight Disease, Resurrect, Shield, Sunripen.

Associate spells: From Dendara Heal Body, and from Ernalda, Regrow Limb. In exchange each receives Cloud Clear

Footnotes and references

1. Glorantha : Genertela, Crucible of the Hero Wars. Genertela Book p49.
2. Troll Gods - excerpts from the Jonstown Compendium citing an Irripi Ontor document which clearly - even allowing for bias - shows the Orlanthe influence.
3. Genertela book p35.
4. This version of the Orlanthe cult is based upon the ideas in Wyrms Footnotes 13.
5. Based upon the statement in Wyrms Footnotes 11 that Yelm offered a Battle Magic spell called Fight Disease. This spirit ritual allows even mere initiates of Yelm to offer continued and valuable service to their communities.



Steve
Gilham

French RuneQuest

A look at Les Dieux de Glorantha & Genertela

by Michael O'Brien

Compared to the rest of the world, RuneQuest in France is immensely popular. Some 10,000 copies of the rules have been sold, and the French equivalent of the AH boxed sets have a print run of between 5-6,000. In comparison Avalon Hill's English-language boxed sets have a print run of 5,000 world-wide.

RQ's popularity in France must be in part due to the extraordinary efforts the licensee, ORIFLAM, has taken with the production of the French translations. I have had the opportunity to have a look at just two of the French versions Les Dieux de Glorantha (Gods of Glorantha) and Genertela. The English language versions of these supplements pale in comparison.

For a start, unlike the flimsy paper-covered booklets of AH, both come in hard-back books. They most closely resemble the now-defunct hardback book versions that Games Workshop produced, but unlike GW, Oriflam has gone to the expense of having their books stitch-bound rather than perfect-bound (glued), which means they should stand up well to continuous use. I don't know a single RuneQuester who bought one of the GW books whose book didn't fall apart before long.

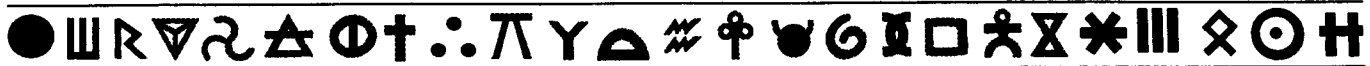
Each book is lavishly illustrated in black-and-white and what is

more, illustrated by artists who know their RuneQuest and know their Gloranthan facts. All the pictures, and there is at least one every couple of pages, are of a professional standard. A sight for sore eyes after the recent AH abominations! What's more, the artwork serves not only as decoration, but helps demonstrate important points in the text. If they try to show to the reader what Lunar decadence is really like, well heck! They don't pussy foot around. The mapwork in Genertela is also nicely done and the Genertela wall-map is in colour and on glossy card. To my decidedly Australian eyes, such phrases as Pass du Dragon, Mer Blanche, Royaume de la guerre, and Terres Rouges have romantic appeal. Despite my lack of French, I'd love to own this map, it's so damn nice.

I can't really comment on the text, as I can't read French and in any case I imagine it's not all that different from the English version. Interestingly though, I notice that Oriflam have arranged the cult listings and Prosopaedia entries in Les Dieux de Glorantha by pantheons instead of alphabetical order. A sensible variant. (Ed - they also reprint the Gods and Goddesses of Glorantha essays from Wyrms Footnotes).

One can only imagine how successful RQ might have been if Avalon Hill had gone to the trouble Oriflam has. I envy those lucky French RuneQuesters! C'est la vie.





Folk Magic

by Sandy Petersen

In the worlds of RuneQuest a vast majority of people are not adventurers. They farm, fish, herd, hunt, and work at their trades in peace. Since magic is so easily available in RuneQuest, they must have some, too. Of the three types of RuneQuest magic, the most convenient for the use of a commoner is spirit magic. Divine magic is too costly and, though devout worshippers of their gods would certainly know one or two divine spells, most prefer to let their priest specialize in this powerful magic. Sorcery takes too long to learn. Also, once a sorcery spell is learned, the hapless user starts at only a minimal chance of success till he works his way up through experience.

Spirit magic is cheap, easily cast, and readily available. Most cults teach it to their worshippers, and people living in rural areas can also obtain it from local shamans. But what spells would an ordinary person have? What use is Firearrow or Spirit Screen to a farmer? Would a tailor waste time and money learning Ironhand? Here follows a list of the RuneQuest spirit magic spells which are especially useful to ordinary people and the reasons why.

Befuddle

This spell probably originated as a party spell. If your life is not in danger it might be enjoyable to be Befuddled, in much the same way that it might be enjoyable to be thoroughly, rousingly, drunk. If you can't afford a bottle of wine, you can always Befuddle yourself for five minutes of cheap entertainment.

Bladesharp

This spell is called Plowsharp among non-warriors, and is a favourite farmer's spell. When the plough man comes to an especially hard clod of ground, he casts Plowsharp to help him cut through it. Other obvious users of this spell are butchers, tanners (who have to skin dead animals), and lumberjacks.

Bludgeon

The carpenter's friend. Every carpenter, builder and shipwright knows Hammerright

(sometimes called Bludgeon). Set up the nails, cast Hammerright, and knock'em through in a fraction of normal time.

Coordination

The non-combat uses of this spell are obvious.

Darkwall

This can provide a needed bit of shade during a break from work, or when out on the desert (if you're a nomad). This spell might be suppressed by the government, for its also serves as a good thieves' spell at night - hide in a doorway and cast Darkwall, and the night watch'll never spot you.

Detectance

Anyone who has ever lost anything in a cluttered barn or workroom can see the value of this spell. Detect Silver (for lost coins), Detect Fire, Detect Linen, and Detect Wool (also good for finding lost sheep) are all handy for a tradesman or housewife. Detect Gold or Silver can also be useful for pointing out counterfeit coins by taking a coin of proven value and placing it further away from the spell caster than the suspected counterfeit. The caster is automatically led to the coin of greater gold content.

Disruption

Better known as Kill Rats, this spell is a proven vermin-eliminator. It can also amuse you on a hot summer night as you sit back and zap flies attracted to your lamp.

Endurance

Most manual labourers know this spell and use it every day. It gives you a second wind at need.

Extinguish

A housewife's spell. Also a good safety spell, permitting speedy and efficient dousing of flames whether or not water is handy. Extinguish 1 puts out a frying pan fire and Extinguish 2 puts out the cooking fire.

Farsee

All herdsmen seeking lost sheep should have this spell. It is also useful for watching the sky at night, especially in seeing some of

the planets.

Glamour

Anyone who has ever gone on a date has doubtless yearned for this spell. Simply turn on the charm at special moments. Since Glamour only lasts five minutes, choose said moments strategically.

Glue

The manifold uses of this spell to housewives and tradesmen alike are too obvious to need much repeating, but gluing two folds of linen together while hemming a garment, gluing a dog's lead to a rock while rushing into the store to buy some goodies, or gluing a small child's pants seat to his chair when he gets too squirmy at dinner-time are all functions that can appeal to the inventive Glue user.

Heal

No one should be without this spell. It is good for emergencies as well as scrapes, cuts, and bruises. Housewives need it for their children, delivered no doubt with a kiss, and for their husbands, perhaps delivered the same. Herders need at least Heal 2 for their livestock.

Ignite

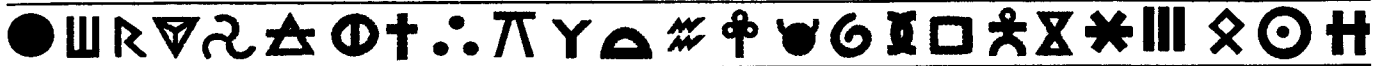
This makes starting the morning fire a snap, and also eliminates needs for cumbersome firesticks, flint, or steel. Most homes consider such implements to be sacred objects, useful only when you want to make things difficult for yourself.

Light

A great spell when you wake up at night and need to see for a few minutes or make it back to the outhouse without tripping over a stump or a sleeping pig.

Lightwall

If you need a brighter light than Light, this is the one to cast. It can also be moved by mental effort of the caster, unlike Light, so its bright glowing panel can be moved high overhead where it lights up an entire yard or street. Good for when the dogs all bark at once, or just being the local busybody.



Mindspeech

In the marketplace it can get too noisy to hear oneself think. And a merchant might need to ask an assistant for information without alerting customers. Mindspeech is the answer. Of course, thieves' look-outs use this spell to silently sound an alarm.

Mobility

Need to catch the stagecoach? Finish ploughing before nightfall? Outrace the nasty Henderson Kid? Mobility is the spell for you.

Protection

A blacksmith can use it to quickly grab a coal out of his oven (don't hang onto it too long, though, because the heat will burn through in a few seconds). A woodworker can use it to keep from getting splinters. And you can cast it on valuable objects to keep them from harm at strategic moments.

Repair

Another spell whose non-combat uses are so obvious that they do not bear repeating.

Second Sight

A good spell for detecting prowlers at night without being detected in return, or for aiming thrown boots at yowling cats in the dark.

Slow

It's sometimes hard to catch a chicken for dinner, or a child for a deserving spanking. Slow helps a lot. And you don't tire yourself out, unlike Mobility.

Strength

For lifting heavy objects, ploughing, or even just playing with a group of kids, this spell is most helpful.

Other spells have non-combat uses, too. The gamesmaster should use his imagination, and so should the players.

This article originally appeared in Space Gamer Magazine and is copyright Sandy Petersen 1986, 1991

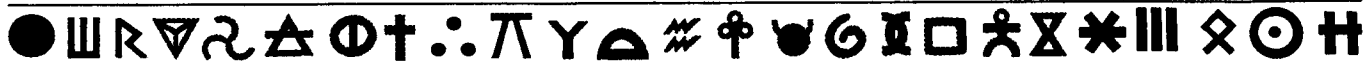


RUMOURS

- 1 Is your character bald? Do not despair! Chalana Arroy has the spell for you! Regrow Limb - one cast per strand of hair. B
- 2 When the Red Emperor is reincarnated, no one is really sure if it is the same person coming back each time. He knows what the last Emperor knew but often he looks different and acts differently. The current Emperor is noted for his sloth and decadence, and his love of a supernatural party. T
- 3 Gloranthan scholars who have over 100% in Read/Write Language are able to read between the lines. R
- 4 As a result of the questionnaire results in Tales #5 two new columns are planned for issue seven: Computer Corner and Student News. A
- 5 Would you buy a used chariot from a Volsaxi? Well, there's not a lot of choice really, since they're the last Orlanthi to use them. T
- 6 D. Dobyski (of Troll Gods & Elder Secrets fame) is front-runner for the Academy of Game Critics Awards "Fingerpaint & Playdoh Award for Outstanding Artistic Underachievement" prize at the next Origins awards. T/F
- 7 The Feathered Horse Queen is an incarnation of the goddess of horses, from the stage before she was totally shredded into a mundane creature in the Gods War. T
- 8 The Lunar city of Yuthuppa is famous for its magical torches which stay alight for a week after being lit, even if buried in the earth T
- 9 Glorantha is a magical place - where else are you more likely to lose an arm or a leg rather than a tooth? R
- 10 Avalon Hill has plans to combine RuneQuest with their Squad Leader system. Keep your eyes peeled for Cross of Bronze, Crescendo of Sales and Hoplite: Anvil of Victory. R
- 11 The next Gloranthan releases will be Sun County, Dorastor, Cults of Glorantha and The Return of the Black Sorcerer. B

Key to Rumours

- | | |
|---|--|
| T | True |
| F | False |
| M | So general as to be meaningless. |
| R | May or may not be true at the referee's option. |
| B | Generally true but also has a substantial false component. |
| A | Too awful to even think about! |



from Pendragon. I came up with five virtues for each religion (with some help from Chaosium, who'd been doing something similar in their HeroQuest work of that time). My list of virtues is presented below. I attempted to use Pendragon's definitions as something an objective outsider would label a cult with. Kyger Litor worshippers don't consider their treatment of Trollkin as cruel.

Originally I'd planned to have a different religious bonus for each cult, but this was too taxing for my imagination. Instead, I decided to use the traits for the old RuneQuest idea of "convincing the examiners". Someone attempting to become an initiate had to roll for the cult's five virtues and make at least three rolls. Priests had to succeed in at least four trait rolls.

Passions

All characters began with Loyalty to King or Tribe or Clan (the cultures's highest authority figure) and Love of Family at 2d6+6. I encourage other passions.

Glory

In Pendragon, Glory is the equivalent of experience points. I kept the rules intact. However, Glory is for knights, so changed the name to Status. In Dragon Pass, it takes more than just glorious deeds to survive. The farmer who raises enough to feed his neighbours in a drought, and the healer who tides her village through an epidemic, are better

regarded than the warrior who slays trolls and brings down the retaliation of their kin.

As in Pendragon, status was awarded for brave deeds or noteworthy personality. Inspired by the Nobles Book, I came up with some rules for earning status by maintaining a standard of living, and by leading others.

Living well is an easy way to gain status. Consumption is easy for others to observe. Depending on the standard of living of their household, characters gain (or lose) yearly status. Having responsibility over others also gives status - but you're held accountable for those you govern. If they're wealthy, it reflects well on you, but if they're impoverished, your greed is to blame. My rules weren't tested because the campaign didn't last long enough for player characters to develop their own households

Skills

I made substantial changes to Pendragon's skill list. I dropped Boat, Courtesy, Folklore, Game, Hawk, Heraldry, Intrigue, and Joust, as more suited to Arthur's court or to Britain than the frontier of Dragon Pass. I dropped the Arthurian Custom skills and replaced them with Gloranthan equivalents: Balazaring, Esrolian, Grazelander, Lunar, Prax, Tarsh, and Theyalan. Worship expanded to include other arcane knowledge, such as the rituals needed to enchant magic items (in essence, it's RQ3's Ceremony). New skills came from RuneQuest 3: Animal Lore, Craft (substance), Devise, Evaluate, Mineral Lore,

Plant Lore, Sleight, Stealth, and World Lore. I added Memorize for the magic system (see below), but it also represents the ability to remember information verbatim, and is useful for heralds and messengers.

Combats

I stayed with the Pendragon combat system, with its system of criticals on the number you need to hit, and fumbling on a 20. The Pendragon fumble favours the sword - swords are dropped, other weapons broken - which felt a bit odd considering the cults that favour spear or axe, but I never got around to changing this.

Pendragon is a game of knights, and discourages the bow. I upped the bow from half damage to 3d6 (a change which has also been made in the 3rd Edition).

In Glorantha, tempered iron is special. Weapons are more durable - like swords, if the skill roll is fumbled, the weapon is dropped, not broken. An iron weapon breaks a bronze sword in a tied resolution. An iron sword breaks any weapon if the rolls are tied. Iron armour stops half again as much damage as its bronze equivalent, but reduces DEX the same (e.g. when swimming).

Magic

I attempted to use Spirit Magic and Divine Magic directly from RQ3 and Gods of Glorantha. Nobody who settled Dragon Pass used sorcery, so I reserved that (and

Religious Virtues Tables

After each religion are listed the deity's Runes, and the traits which that religion deems the most important.

Darkness Pantheon

Argan Argar	Energetic, Selfish, Honest, Indulgent, Trusting
Kyger Litor	Vengeful, Selfish, Cruel, Proud, Indulgent
Xiola Umbar	Forgiving, Generous, Just, Merciful, Trusting
Zorak Zoran	Valorous, Vengeful, Arbitrary, Cruel, Indulgent

Earth Pantheon

Aldrya	Modest, Suspicious, Lustful, Pious, Valorous
Asrelia	Selfish, Deceitful, Temperate, Worldly, Modest
Babeester Gor	Energetic, Vengeful, Valorous, Cruel, Suspicious
Ernalda	Lustful, Forgiving, Generous, Merciful, Modest
Flamal	Lustful, Energetic, Forgiving, Generous, Merciful
Maran Gor	Chaste, Vengeful, Arbitrary, Cruel, Indulgent
Mostal	Cruel, Modest, Arbitrary, Temperate, Pious
Voria	Energetic, Forgiving, Generous, Merciful, Trusting

Moon Pantheon

Blue Moon	Deceitful, Vengeful, Suspicious
Red Goddess	(have all traits at 10, +2)
Seven Mothers	Energetic, Generous, Proud, Temperate, Valorous

Nomad Gods

Eiritha	Generous, Energetic, Forgiving, Honest, Merciful
Storm Bull	Proud, Arbitrary, Indulgent, Suspicious, Valorous

Storm Pantheon

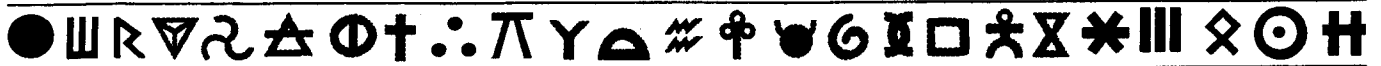
Chalana Arroy	Forgiving, Generous, Merciful, Modest, Trusting
Eurmial	Lustful, Lazy, Deceitful, Selfish, Indulgent
Humakt	Energetic, Honest, Proud, Temperate, Valorous
Issaries	Energetic, Selfish, Proud, Suspicious, Worldly
Orlanth	Energetic, Generous, Just, Proud, Valorous
Lankhor Mhy	Honest, Just, Proud, Suspicious, Worldly

Sun Pantheon

Chalana Arroy	Chaste, Forgiving, Generous, Merciful, Trusting
Dendara	Chaste, Forgiving, Generous, Merciful, Modest
Golden Bow	Valorous, Energetic, Proud, Honest, Temperate
Hippoi	Generous, Energetic, Forgiving, Honest, Merciful
Hyalor	Just, Valorous, Generous, Energetic, Proud
Lodril	Modest, Energetic, Worldly, Lustful, Indulgent
Yelm	Chaste, Generous, Honest, Just, Valorous
Yelmialio	Chaste, Energetic, Honest, Temperate, Valorous
Yelorna	Chaste, Valorous, Vengeful, Energetic, Honest

Miscellaneous Deities

Donandar	Energetic, Deceitful, Merciful, Generous, Indulgent
Hunter	Valorous, Energetic, Generous, Merciful, Proud
Lanbril	Cowardly, Selfish, Deceitful, Cruel, Suspicious
Uleria	Lustful, Forgiving, Generous, Merciful, Indulgent



dragonewt magic) for GM special effects. In Pendragon, magic is rare. In Glorantha, it's common. I tried to compromise by making it common but weak - most spells did the same amount of damage as in RQ, even though Pendragon hit points are about twice RQ hit points. If you wanted to keep the feel of RuneQuest, you'd probably have to double spell effects. Not doing this keeps things simple - Bladesharp would have to add 1 to the skill, and 2 to damage. My approach kept it at +1 for both.

Spell resistance is an opposed roll of the caster's magic points (before casting the spell) and the target's. Success gives the caster a POW check.

Spirit combat consists of opposed magic point rolls. The loser loses d3 magic points (but if he made his roll, the winner loses one magic point). Passion spirits can have actual passions or traits. In one encounter, a character lost a spirit combat and became covertly possessed by a Forgiveness spirit. This meant he became incredibly meek, with a Forgiveness of 20.

Spirit Magic

A character may know as many different spirit magic spells as his Memorize skill. A spell can be learned as the winter training. To cast a spirit magic spell, the adventurer makes an opposed roll of his POW versus the number of magic points of the spell. If the adventurer fumbles, he expends as many magic points as the spell he was trying to cast, and the spell is not cast. If he loses the resolution, he expends one magic point and the spell is not cast. If he wins, he expends the magic points of the spell, and the spell is cast. If he criticals, he expends only one magic point.

The number of points of armour the caster's wearing are added to the magic points in the spell.

Example: Suboti, wearing cuirboilli armour (6 points), tries to cast Bladesharp 4

on her sword. Her Power is 7. She rolls a 2 for her skill, but an 8 for the spell. If she were not armoured, she would have won, but with her cuirboilli she doesn't. Losing the resolution, she marks off one magic point and tries again. This time she rolls a 7, and a 4 for the spell. She wins the resolution, and marks off only one magic point since she got a critical success. Her sword now glows with the Bladesharp 4 spell.

Most of the spell descriptions are similar. If you're Befuddled, you get to make a Recognize roll, rather than an INT roll, to figure out who your friends and enemies are. Each round you're Demoralized, you make a Valour roll. If you succeed, you fight at full effectiveness; if you fumble, you attempt to flee. Fireblade adds +2d6 damage.

Divine Magic

I made very few changes here. Casting divine magic involves a roll opposing the skill (treated as 20) with the points of armour.

It's worth noting that in Pendragon, characters have family. It's quite likely that a parent, grandparent, aunt, or uncle will be a priest. For ten years, they take their winter gain as a point of POW, which they sacrifice for divine magic (generally, spells that benefit the household, like Bless Crops). At the end of this time, they can start making trait rolls to qualify. Eventually, they will.

Enchanting

Creating a magic item involves a Worship roll (rather than separate Ceremony, Enchant, and Summoning). Many families had at least one priest. Each year, a priest can take his winter gain as a point of POW, and attempt to create an enchanted item. This means that heirloom magic is available.

Economics

I planned to have an optional detailed econ-

omic system, which would determine standard of living. If you ran a farm, your Plant Lore skill and your Bless Crops spell would affect your income. This wasn't tested, since characters either opted for the simpler system from the Nobles book, or weren't involved in running a household.

Experience

As I intended to run Pendragon Pass as a typical Pendragon campaign, approximately one adventure per year, I felt Pendragon's experience system (roll for checks once per year) was appropriate.

Conversion

The Pendragon Pass campaign was intended to be Pendragon in Glorantha. It wasn't a conversion of an existing campaign, so I didn't worry about converting existing RQ characters. Furthermore, the campaign took place well before existing characters were born.

Comments

One thing I hadn't expected was the number of high-level characters. By aging characters, it's moderately easy to get a Priest or even a Rune Lord (even though it might take several attempts to make the trait rolls). Also, as mentioned above, heirloom magic items are fairly common. This gave a different feel from the typical RuneQuest game, but I felt it was appropriate, since Pendragon tries to portray characters as members of their society, with the family being one of the most important elements of that society. Also, rune level characters generated this way are powerful, but not extremely powerful. Only status can raise skills above 20 (and significant status comes from adventuring), and the power and variety of magic items tended to be limited (they came from the priest's limited repertoire of enchantment skills, and didn't include GM specials).

It turned out to be a little harder than I expected to GM one year's worth of adventure per session. The details sometimes multiplied. I don't recall this as a problem when I played Pendragon. I felt the campaign was enough of a success to offer to run it again when I moved (my new players decided to play in my Pendragon-based cyberpunk campaign instead).

Acknowledgements

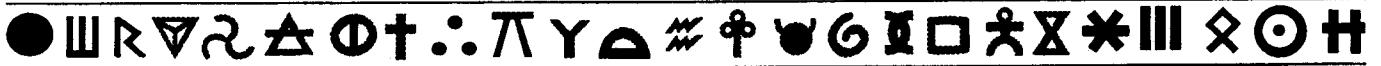
While my ideas should in no way be considered official, I owe Chaosium a great deal of thanks for their help in providing encouragement. Greg Stafford gave me guidance on the history and peoples of Dragon Pass, and Sandy Petersen cheerfully answered my questions, and provided many cult traits.

Chalana Arroy

Chalana Arroy, the goddess of healing, is associated with almost every pantheon. Specifically, she's associated with both Orlanth and Yelm. These deities and the cultures that worship them are very different - the Orlanthi have female kings, which is unthinkable to a Yelmite. Would a Chalana Arroy initiate in Sartar be expected to behave the same as one in Peloria? Probably not. In my Pendragon Pass campaign, which uses Pendragon mechanics to portray the recolonization of Dragon Pass, deities have five favoured personality traits. To become Priest or Priestess, a character must succeed at four of the five traits (replacing RuneQuest's POW*3% Test of Holiness).

To reflect the differences between the Storm and Sun pantheons, Chalana Arroy's virtues are Forgiving, Generous, Merciful, Modest, Trusting, or else Chaste, Forgiving, Generous, Merciful, Trusting. This can provide some interesting theological differences as characters travel through different parts of Glorantha. A temple in First Blessed may segregate patients by gender, but the one in Boldhome encourages erotic interest as a milestone on the road to recovery. Other differences suggest themselves - some temples might allow learning parrying skills, while others restrict healers to Dodge.

It's also important to remember that these are virtues - they're goals, not absolutes. There are faithful Chalana Arroy initiates, and others who sometimes sin. It's possible to find a Suspicious healer (but she'd have a hard time with the cult practice of giving out healing to anyone who wants it, no questions asked).



bronze-headed Maul that pack a walloping 5D6 (Blunt) damage. Squeem tries out Latissimus's Broadsword and makes less of an impression with it, doing only his D6 base damage with it. He'd be better off with a Shortsword. Technically its damage should be one level lower than the Broadsword, but it does a minimum damage of 1D6 due to its handy point, plus it's an impaling weapon so it does double damage if it gets through armour to the vitals! Squeem likes this, nasty pointed things always did appeal to him. He's too weak to use a Greatsword, Greataxe or Maul, not to mention too small, and Crossbows are too hard to cock. A sling is good and cheap, though, and will do 1D10 (Blunt) damage - maybe he can't knock somebody's block off, but he can at least cause a painful headache!

Next, drop the idea of separate attack and parry skills - real fights aren't that mechanical. Instead, use one skill percentage for each weapon. This skill represents your ability to attack, parry, do the odd dodge, and use your shield to best advantage (when you're using one). In more detail, this means that:

a) When two characters fight, they roll simultaneously for their weapon skills. The one who rolls the highest within his skill percentage has hit his opponent, and he gets to roll for a hit location and damage. However, if the other character also rolled within his skill percentage, he gets to add 3 armour points to his protection against the hit - if he is using a shield. Does this favour shield users? You bet. Even when your shield gets knocked out of the way, it still stops more force than a parrying weapon.

b) Specials ignore armour (but not armour points from skin, magic or shields), and critical hits ignore all armour from all sources and do maximum damage. This method meshes nicely with the slightly lower average damages you get with this system. Also, it appeals to me because I can't stand players who buy up half the armour in the known world, then lurch around in it thinking they're invincible. Most ancient and medieval armourers had gaps and weak spots.

c) Characters fighting from the ground are at -10% in their skill, and characters fighting a downed opponent are at +10%.

d) When a character is not directly attacked, he may hit a distracted or outnumbered opponent by rolling within his own weapon skill - he does not have to roll higher than any roll the opponent may be making. In other words, a free shot at the distracted opponent. No non-sword versus sword penalties apply, and - if the outnumbered opponent has a shield - a shield only protects

the outnumbered opponent's shield side.

e) A two-weapon fighter gets two attack rolls, and hits with any and all rolls that exceed his opponent's, assuming the two-weapon fighter rolls within his own skill percentage. You may want to an off-hand sword or main-gauche to count as a 1-armour-point shield if it isn't used to attack with. Also, animals with multiple attacks, such as shadowcats, combine all attacks into one Grapple roll, with a +10% bonus for each extra attack.

f) If damage (ignoring armour) exceeds the target's SIZ, the target must roll his DEX x 5 or fall down. If damage exceeds SIZ x 2, the target is automatically knocked down.

g) Characters may use the Dodge skill but cannot attack in that round. A successful dodge prevents a foe from hitting you.

Spells may be cast while dodging, provided you make an INT x 3 concentration roll.

h) Unarmed combat can be simplified by combining it with a "Grapple" skill that does Base -1 level of Blunt damage, with D3 as the minimum damage. Change the damage to "Chopping" (i.e. normal damage) if the attacker is using teeth or claws. In fact, considering the close-in nature of knife-fighting, I recommend doing away with a separate Dagger skill and instead allowing a grappler armed with one to do Dagger damage with his Grapple skill (see Table two). Shields are useless for grappling.

EXAMPLE: Latissimus D'Orsey is insulted by a band of itinerant flute repairmen and a scuffle ensues between him and their leader, a great brute of STR 12, SIZ 18. Latissimus's Base Damage is 2D6, so his grapple damage is one level lower than at D10,

Table 2 : Weapons

Name	Damage	Damage Type	Notes
Dagger	Base -1	Impaling	Minimum damage = D4 Maximum damage = D10
Shortsword	Base -1	Impaling	Minimum damage = D6
Broadsword	Base	Chopping	
Club	Base	Blunt	
Mace	Base +2	Blunt	
Axe	Base +1	Chopping	
Warpick	Base	Impaling	
Flail	Base +2	Blunt	Ignores shield, hit self on Fumble.
Spear (one-handed)	Base -1	Impaling	Minimum damage = D6
Shield Bash	Base	Blunt	Will not count as armour point if used to attack.
Longspear	Base	Impaling	Minimum damage = D6
Quarterstaff	Base +1	Blunt	
Greatsword	Base +1	Chopping	Requires both STR & SIZ = 9
Greataxe	Base +2	Chopping	Requires both STR & SIZ = 9
Maul	Base +3	Blunt	Requires both STR & SIZ = 9
Bow	Light D4 Medium D6 Heavy D8	Impaling Impaling Impaling	Requires minimum STR of 5 Requires minimum STR of 9 Requires minimum STR of 13
Crossbow	Light D8 Medium D10 Heavy 2D6	Impaling Impaling Impaling	Requires minimum STR of 9
Sling	D10	Blunt	
Staff Sling	2D6	Blunt	
Thrown Spear	Base -1	Impaling	Minimum damage = D6
Dart	Base -2	Impaling	Minimum damage = D4 Maximum damage = D10
Thrown Axe	Base	Chopping	
Thrown Dagger	Base -2	Impaling	Minimum damage = D4 Maximum damage = D10
Thrown Rock	Base -2	Blunt	Minimum damage = D2



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Corwen's Saga

By Steve Thomas

Notes

1. It is widely believed amongst the Sartarite Orlanathi that the fortunes of the tribe mirror the fortunes of the Harvest Couple. Thus, if they are fruitful, the harvests will be good, whereas if they have a child who is born dead, disaster is sure to follow.

2. Corwen is a HouseCarl. In Orlanathi society, the lowest rank of free man is the Caltar, and the majority of tribesmen are of this rank. The rank of Carl is next. This is a special rank given only to those in favour with the clan chieftain or tribal king. They make up around one in twenty of the tribesmen.

A sub-group of this is the Housecarl. This is a warrior kept by the tribal King (even female tribal leaders are called "King"), in his home, and at his expense, for all or part of the year. It is a position of great honour. Only rarely do clan chieftains keep Housecarls.

Next is Thane. Branduan is a Thane, which is largely a martial rank. Thanes are the officers of the clan fyrd, or militia. (The fyrd is captured by the clan champion, and led by the clan chieftain, or his nominee).

Finally, there are the Household Heads, Clan

Freezeday/Harmony/Fire 1615

On this day the Lunar recruiters came to Greydog village. The planting had finished for the season, and we had spent the day in the Inn, drinking and discussing women. Branduan was besotted by a princess of the Colymar tribe, and this far into his cups could think of nothing else. She liked him well enough in her turn, I suppose, but her father wanted a good match for her, and had set Branduan a task which he despaired of achieving.

"Why does he insist on this duty, Corwen? What has the old bastard got against me - was I not made Thane at the lawspeak last year? I could make her a fine husband. I know I could."

"Branduan, you are the youngest Thane in the tribe, which in itself is a fine thing, and with your pretty face you could charm the birds from the trees, but old Jarnor is immune to all that, and thinks only of the fact that you have lovers in every village from here to Boldhome, and scarcely as many cows as will feed you, let alone her and the little ones she will bear. If you marry a princess, you must be prepared to work for her, and be able to keep her!"

"You did precious little work for your wife, and she was named Queen, if only for the day."

"Aye that's true, the gods dropped her into my lap after the midsummers race, so that I was the Harvest King and she the Queen, but still I have had little joy of her."

"She has given you three fine children. Do not forget that."

"Yes, I know - she has borne me children aplenty, but even though our union brought much luck for the clan that year, it brought precious little luck for me!¹ All day she complains, and I must listen to her yowling and the children crying.

Is it any wonder that I petitioned the King to be a Carl² at his court? Sometimes I feel like your father, watching you chase the village girls, although we are but the same age."

"I swear that you are as dour as old Triock sometimes, Corwen. You are married to a wife who is sweet and fair, with children who are strong and healthy. You have more talent with a blade than any man has a right to, there is no work to be done, as much Bulsters Fine Ale as we can drink, and still you complain!"

"You too were complaining earlier, my friend; women are no comfort to either of us, though you love

to take your ease with them, and few of them resist."

"The only time you cease to moan is when other men are trying to kill you! I have seen you in battle, and I swear you will only be happy when someone succeeds, and you have breathed your last."

"That is true of us all."

It was always this way when we had been drinking. Branduan would talk of his latest love, and of how he hoped to succeed old Kornos Longbrewer as clan chieftain, and I would chafe at the inaction, and try to think of ways of avoiding my domestic duties. We were very different, he and I, but there was no man that I would rather have at my back when it mattered, and I loved him well for it.

These were the thoughts which were going through my mind when a group of children ran noisily into the Inn, yelling that the Lunars were coming to storm the village. It was a bright day outside, and the sunlight streaming through the open door made us squint uncomfortably at the world outside. Briggpice the fool looked up from his table in the corner, before raising his flask, cheering, and slumping back into unconsciousness. Branduan and I looked at him and then at each other.

"Let us see what these decadent whoresons have come for." I said. "After all, you are the only person of rank here to greet them."

"By the Winds, why is it always me that must meet them?" he said.

"Because you are always in the Inn!"

He laughed, and we gathered our weapons to meet the intruders. We of the Greydogs had no love for the Lunar invaders, but we were a conquered people, and must needs be civil. Branduan had one of the children fetch his fine linen shirt and his cloak with the silver clasp, whilst I buckled on my sword of iron, and pulled on my mail shirt. Branduan helped me with the fittings, for we were both still sotted with drink, and we went out onto the village common.

The Lunar tribesmen were awaiting us, and had already set up a table to parley across. I had expected to see some effete administrator, with a shiny guard of honour standing in attendance like so many useless baubles at a festival, but those awaiting us wore armour of sturdy bronze, and carried themselves like soldiers. There were seven of them, standing in a crescent behind the table with their crimson cloaks flowing behind them in the breeze. Sitting quietly at the table was a swarthy woman in iron armour, wearing a silver full moon; the insignia of a Centurion³. The soldier standing behind her wore a Sergeants crescent-go medallion. He held a spear-and-a-half, and stood stiffly to attention. I hoped that he was as uncomfortable as he looked.

As we made our way through the crowd of curious youngsters who had already gathered, I felt uneasy. What were Lunar soldiers doing here, I wondered. I had no sense that they meant harm to anyone here, but still I was not pleased to see them. The Centurion looked up, and gestured to Branduan to be seated. He accepted the proffered stool, opposite the Lunar, and I stood behind him, as was proper. It was Branduan who spoke first.

"Well, centurion, what business have you with us today? We have no dispute with you at present, and our taxes are paid - although you do not look like a tax



collector to me."

"That is true. I am no bureaucrat, and so I will speak plainly with you, Greydog. I have come to offer you a way to pay your taxes, so that next year you may keep more of your precious cows and sheep, and may worship your heathen gods more fruitfully."

"And what is it that you are offering us that will enrich our lives so greatly?"

"I offer your warriors the chance to aid in the inevitable conquest of the Children of the Reaching Moon when we ride against the hill barbarians of the south. You will gain favour with the Empire, and be well paid for your troubles. You will not be asked to do anything which we ourselves will not do, and we will replace all equipment lost or destroyed in the course of your service. It is a good bargain, barbarian, and we do you honour by offering it."

"You come to offer us money to help you kill fellow Orlanthi, who have offered us no offence. There seems to be little honour in that, Centurion."

"Do not play the innocent with me, barbarian. I know your ways; the Poss tribe have lived not five leagues from here since the time of Sartar Kingmaker, and still you Greydogs must make war on them. You have no love for those of your blood, so do not pretend otherwise."

"The Poss are not of our blood, as well you know, and they kidnapped and violated the wife of Chief Vortigern. They are scum on the face of the earth, and deserve no better than to be slaughtered like the goats they are! Do not speak of them."

"That was two centuries ago, and all those involved are long dead, yet you still maintain the feud. You are a vengeful and violent people, and I merely offer you the chance to be paid to do that which you would be doing anyway."

I sighed inwardly. Branduan had hated the Poss ever since that incident when they had accused him of stealing their prize bull. I hoped that he would not get carried away and involve us in a fight. The Lunars looked as if they could handle themselves well if it came to blows, and the authorities would crucify half the village if their recruiters were killed. I laid a warning hand on his shoulder, as the Centurion continued.

"We are not asking you to kill your kin. The tribes of which I speak are thirty leagues south of here; you have no family amongst them, and even as we speak they are pillaging your relatives in Wilms Church. Besides, what else will your warriors do all through the summer, now that there is peace between us? Do not tell me that they would prefer to stay behind, sopping themselves in beer and wiping the drool from their babies chins, like your women."

"There is no dishonour in caring for the young. And many of our women are finer warriors than any men of your effete empire."

"Then prove it, and allow them to show their worth in fighting with us. You may be coward, but let the rest decide for themselves whether they can equal our troops on the battlefield!"

"By the Black Wind, I will!" Branduan retorted. "And let any who would join do so! But we do not come cheap, Lunar. I demand one golden Wheel for every day of service, and one quarter of that for the common soldiery. In addition, any who are killed must have their pay delivered to their kin until the end of the season."

"We will offer three Imperials for soldiers, and twice that for officers."

"My conditions are the only ones you will get from us, Lunar."

The Centurion shrugged. "Very well. You drive a hard bargain, barbarian. I only hope that you fight as hard."⁴

By the time Kornos Longbrewer arrived, they had finished arguing over the details, and Branduan had made his mark on the Centurions parchment, sealing the agreement. The old Thane gave Branduan a fierce look from beneath his grey brows, but could not retract the bargain that had been struck. He had never approved of Branduan's elevation to Thane, arguing that he was too young, but Branduan had the right to bind us to this agreement, and it was certainly a good price. He would gain respect within the clan for making it, and I think it was that which annoyed Kornos the most.

As for myself, I could not help wondering whether Branduan had not acted rashly in pledging us to aid the Lunar cause, and after we had left the parley table, I asked him of it.

"That was a good bargain, Branduan, but why did you allow that chaospaw to anger you into agreeing to fight for her in the first place?"

"If I had not agreed, then someone else would have, and do you think that I would have made such a bargain had I not appeared angry?"

"You dissemble too easily to be a warrior, my friend."

"But I do not want to be a warrior. I want to be a Chieftain, or a King! And besides, did you see the look on old Kornos's face when he realised that the decision had been made without him?"

"In all truth, you should not have made that agreement without him, Branduan. He will hold it against you for as long as he remembers, and he has a long memory."

"That is true, but he is old, and his memory may well outlast his life. It is not he that will be fighting this summer, but you and I, and those like us, and it is right that I should bargain for us."

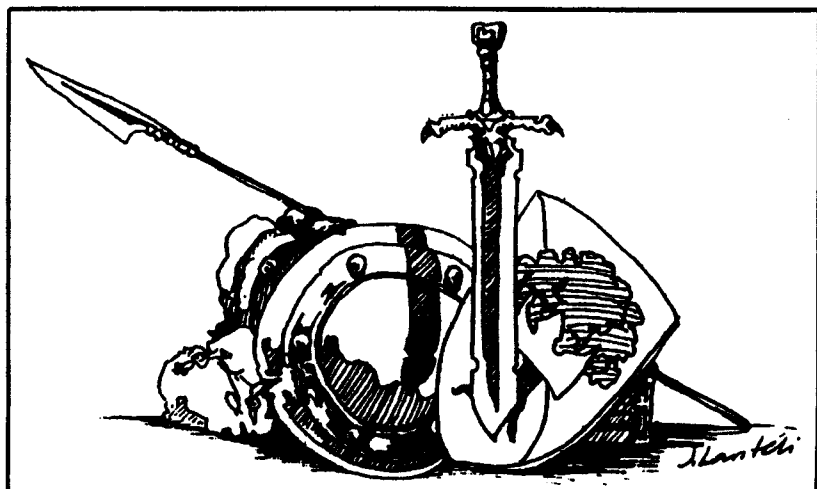
I negotiated a Thane's pay from them, by dint of the iron which I wore, and a week later we left the village on Lunar business. Twoscore men and women left with us, to risk their lives for the Empire which held us in thrall.

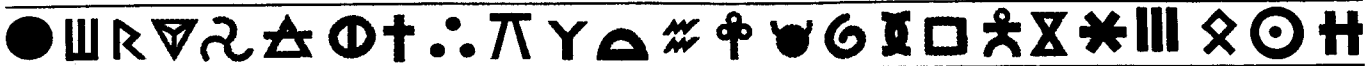
Chieftains, and Clan Council Members, followed by the tribal King.

3. Her official rank is a Lieutenant in the heartlands corps (This can be inferred from the bronze armour - provincial troops wear leather and cuirboilli). Various symbols of rank are used in the Lunar army, most common of which are the crescent-go medallion for NCO's and the full moon medallion for officers. The more richly decorated the medallion is, the higher in rank the officer is. Officers also carry batons - bronze for Lieutenants, iron for Captains and gold for Generals, and senior staff officers.

4. In 1615, after much mutual raiding, the Lunars launched a full-scale invasion of the Grazelands and attempted to bring the horsemen and their herds to a decisive battle. This left them somewhat overstretched when the Volsaxi launched their own raids into southern Sartar.

In order to meet this new threat the Lunars were forced to recruit many Sartarite tribesmen, often at great cost. However, these measures were successful in ending the Volsaxi raids, though the campaign against the Grazelanders dragged on into Earth season, with little success.





Daughters of Darkness

Tony Hickie and myself are the authors of the RQ scenario pack *Daughters of Darkness*, due for imminent publication by Avalon Hill. As all good GMs should know, roleplaying is primarily a social event in which the GM takes the part of a story-teller in order to entertain the players. In this series of articles we hope to illustrate the creative purpose by which this occurred in the case of *Khafre-Menes* (Kalfray Men/ish).

In 1979, when RQ1 first appeared on the market, Tony and I seized upon what we considered to be this great step forward in RPG mechanics (indeed, we both still retain our copies of the sturdy rules book). Drawing upon our experience as wargamers interested in political, social and economic aspects of gaming, we constructed a campaign which would allow players to interact with a 'logical' structure reflecting all three of these aspects.

As can be seen from the above extract from the original material, *Khafre-Menes* was a Gloranthan Gateway campaign. At that time Chaosium preferred to keep Glorantha under their editorial control and *Khafre-Menes* was changed to a non-Gloranthan setting, which allowed us more freedom to follow our own creative ideas. After some three rewrites, including developing and discarding a Mesopotamian pantheon to provide the religious framework, *Khafre-Menes* was no longer somewhere to the north-east of the Lunar Empire and had divided onto a system of eleven citystates. By the time of the final rewrite, however, it was re-aggregated into a single kingdom and the whole pack was much reduced in size. Yet throughout whole process the scenarios hardly changed and at least twenty were never listed for publication.

At its largest *Khafre-Menes* allowed our players many options which they could pursue. PCs had obligations and responsibilities not only towards each other, but also towards NPCs. At times, consequently, extra-group pressures on individuals could have PCs at loggerheads. The players were encouraged to develop their PCs as they wished, but constrained and motivated by what we hoped was a realistic environment to which they could relate on a continuing basis. As an example, political aspects of the campaign were developed in such a way that PCs were standing for election to political office in order to protect themselves from the intrigues of others.

Essentially three things were stressed in our

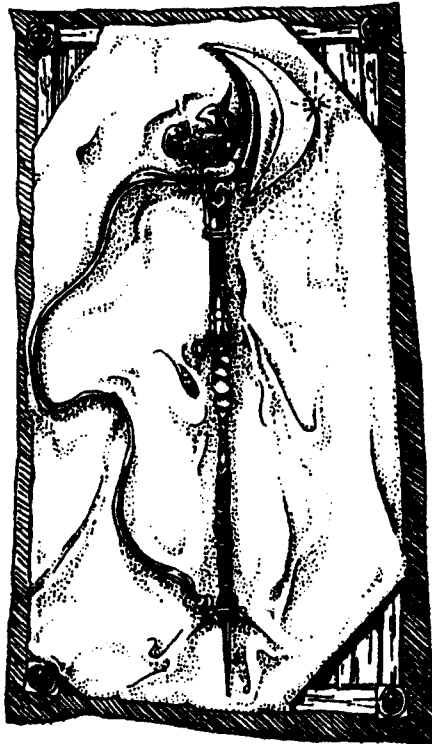
campaign:

1. PC-individuality and social contacts. Amongst other devices, solo scenarios were used for this purpose, each taking up to one hour to run.
2. Interaction with NPCs through agreements, alliances, double-crosses and so forth within the politics of the city of Santon. Kinship relationships were stressed as a major vehicle of social processes.
3. Non-lethal combat. The players were able to set themselves up as an independent street gang in a city rather like Cicero's Rome. Wanton public killing would allow the forces that controlled law and order to move against the PCs. Thus we developed the subdual combat system described below.

Subdual Combat

This rule extends the standard RQ rules concerning pulling blows, etc.

Whenever a character makes an attack with a non-edged melee weapon, he may declare that he is attacking to subdue the target. When a subdual attack is made damage is calculated normally for weapon-type and any bonuses, but any damage which is done to a location which would reduce it to below zero is ignored. Should any hit location be reduced to zero by subdual damage, the normal rules apply except that the character is not considered to be bleeding to death if the location is the abdomen, chest or head. Similarly, a character to zero hit points is not dead, he is simply unconscious.



Subdual damage scored against a character must be kept note of separately from normal combat damage, as recovery from subdual damage is different. Recovering from subdual damage uses a system similar to the recovery of magic points, but based on the injured character's total hit points. For example, a character with twelve hit points would recover one hit point every two hours. This recovery rate is applicable simultaneously to each hit location damaged. If a hit location or total hit points are reduced to zero, a number of game-turns elapses equal to the roll of 1D6, after which the first hit point is restored immediately, recovery then proceeding as above.

If a character takes both subdual and normal damage, normal damage takes precedence in determining the character's status.

A character striking to subdue and rolling a critical hit causes normal damage against his target (he hit it too hard). Any fumbled attacks will also cause normal damage if they strike someone.

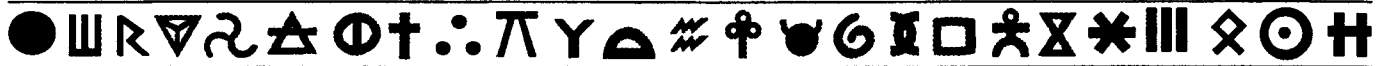
Healing spells will restore subdual damage normally, as will First Aid.

Example: Kraftor (12 hit points), our local hero, becomes involved in a good humoured brawl where no-one is trying to kill anyone else, so subdual damage rules are in effect. Kraftor finds himself squaring up to his old drinking buddy Varlish. Both men are unarmed and attack each other with their fists.

Kraftor attacks Varlish first because of his superior strike rank and gets through his opponents guard, doing four points of subdual damage to Varlish's chest. Varlish's chest can take six points, however, and wincing painfully he strikes back at Kraftor. Kraftor's parry fails to block Varlish blow (perhaps he should have dodged instead), which lands on the side of Kraftor's head for six points of subdual damage. Kraftor's head can take four points of damage only, so the hit location is reduced to zero and he slides unconscious to the floor.

Kraftor roll 1D6 to find out how long he will be KO'd for and throws a 1. He recovers his first hit point five minutes after losing consciousness and starts to come round. In the course of the next six hours he will recover his remaining hit points.

Next time: Politics, law and the Street-gangs of Santon.



Jaxarte Whyded's "Grand Gazetteer of Prax"

Translated from the Pavic by Michael O'Brien

Floriat's Translation

I think I can interpret this entry. "Grey" is the last watch of the night, ending as the first feeble rays of dawn fret the clouds. As tireless in pleasure as he was in government, the governor had obviously made a night of it this evening, as was his wont. "Rug" was presumably Phamastes Rugbagan, an Etyries merchant who enjoyed particular favour under Sor-Eel's administration. His nickname came more from the artless toupee he affected, than a shortening of his surname.

There are numerous interpretations I could have given when translating the phrase "sank 3", all possibly applicable to Sor-Eel. That he "beggared" Rugbagan and asks his brother to send the customary plate around suggests they were gambling rather than whoring; my guess is Sor-Eel "sank" 3 flagons of Rugbagan's best Pelorian, yet still managed to win. In the final sentence he asks his brother to extend his apologies to an unknown G., presumably some doxy he is trying to placate with the nights winnings.

Sor-Eel signs off with "Shine", very much de rigueur at the time, a truncation of the religious phrase "May the Unearthly Light of the Goddess Shine Upon You". Because of the perceived ambiguity of the shortened phrase Icilius Overholy, General Priestess of the Provincial Church, promulgated an edict in 1621 which condemned its use in all documents throughout the Empire. Only those written in the Dara Happan tongue were exempted, for that language has separate intransitive verbs to differentiate between lunar and solar light.

However, it is the middle section of the note that is germane to my study, and to which I must apply myself here. Too often we sages divert the reader with scholarly tangents!

It is apparent that Bor-Eel had doubts about Jaxarte's usefulness in the provincial administration. Sor-Eel obviously had a more optimistic estimation, yet he took great stock of his brother's opinions: here he asks Bor-Eel if he thinks Jaxarte would be a suitable hostage to send to the truce they were arranging between the rival Sable and Bison nations.

Presumably, Bor-Eel concurred with his brother's estimation that the callow Jaxarte was more-or-less expendable. He was duly appointed "overseer of the Truce" upon his return from Corflu some three days later. Details of this ill-fated truce are described by Jaxarte in the journal below.

Jaxarte and the Bison Khan

After his eventful yet relatively safe journeys to Sun County and Weis domain (described in Tales #3 and #5), Jaxarte finally made his first foray onto the Praxian plain itself. Following his experiences at Raus Fort, Jaxarte travelled downriver to the Lunar seaport of Corflu, hoping to catch up with his elder brother Goslem, who was fleeing his Humakti adversaries. Whether or not Jaxarte met his brother at Corflu is unknown; the next entry in Jaxarte's journal was written in Pavis sometime later, and describes his elation at being entrusted with an important mission by his uncle Sor-Eel, governor of Prax.

Sor-Eel's true motives can be seen in a confidential message to his half-brother and confidant Bor-Eel, found and translated by the inquisitive junior sage Floriat Fedora, sometime after the governor's fall from grace:

Grey-Wild-Harmony-7146

Bor, my brother,

Sank 3, still beggared Rug! Send plate.

Jaxarte: despite your reservations, I still think the lad shows promise. Don't send him home just yet.

A suggestion: send our J to truce? Sounds great to me just now.

Your thoughts on the morrow, when I'm sober.

Give my pardon to G: smooth her off with R's plate, mayhap?

Shine, SOR

Floriat, as always, provides copious footnotes taken from her translation of Jaxarte's private journal.

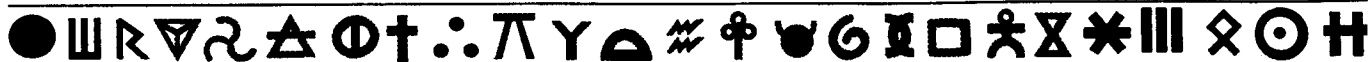
All Praise the Reaching Moon!

I Jaxarte Whyded, Commissioner of the Imperial Census, here relate my experiences as Overseer of the Truce between the great Sable and Bison tribes of Prax.

Water-Death-Fire-7146

I must admit, the summons to appear before the illustrious Bor-Eel (half-brother of my uncle the governor) left me with quaking bowels and fluttering heart. As I saw it, audience with him meant only one thing: I was to be sent back to the Heartlands, disgraced! For Bor-Eel has always despised me since I arrived in Pavis, seeing me as one who has gained his position through family connections. While I cannot deny this, I must point out the irony that but for the prestige and influence of his half-brother, Bor-Eel himself would have never reached the privileged rank he now enjoys!^[1] I imagine my surprise then, when I found myself leaving his chambers wearing the chain of a Lunar emissary and bearing the new title: "Overseer of the Truce"!

I am to attend a midnight conference at the offices of Gimgim the Grim, the chief of our intelligence bureau, for a briefing on the mission. Why Gimgim insists on conducting his



affairs after dark I do not know. It's Photius's reckoning that his master feels his oratory has better effect on listeners yearning for the bottle or bed.^[2]

Clay-Death-Fire-7/46 (the next day)

My commission appears simple: I am to proceed by mule, with a small escort, to Three Twigs Sloop, a salt-lick a half-day's ride to the south of the city. There a large band of outlawed Bison tribe have made camp. Knowing Gimгим has Bor-Eel's ear I foolishly tried to impress the intelligence chief with my initiative by pointing out that, were I to ride on horseback, I could make the journey in less than two hours. So much for initiative: I then got a stern lecture from the incredulous Gimгим who rightly berated my ignorance of the Praxian ingrained and deep-seated antipathy towards horses^[3]. And he promised that our conversation would be reported to Bor-Eel! I sat out the rest of the briefing in silence.

Sometime after I arrive, a party of Sable-rider allies will arrive and a prisoner-exchange will take place. In a recent raid, the Bison people took captive one of the Sable Queens (priestesses). The Sable-people are our greatest allies in Prax, and it was Sor-Eel's personal intervention that has enabled the truce to take place. Rather than risk antagonising the Sable-riders, uncle has promised the Bison Khan "great treasure" in return for the Sable priestess. This treasure I am to carry with me on my mule train. In addition, the Sables must give back a quantity of their own captives, taken in retributive raids since the lass was lost. It will be my task to ensure both parties deal fairly with one another and uphold the truce. I am also to give the Bison Khan uncles's assurance of their safe-passage back into Vulture's Country after the negotiations have concluded. I leave on the morrow at dawn, and if all goes well, should be safely back in Pavis the following evening.^[4]

Windsday-Death-Fire-7/46 (one season later...)

I dictate this in the Deezola temple, for I am now abed, and must remain so for another week according to the tender priestesses. I cannot write myself, for I am swathed from crown-to-foot in cloths soaked in soothing skullbush seed-oil and am forbidden to move overly much. Photius now sits at the end of my pallet stylus in hand awaiting my instructions. Unless he stops grinning at my misfortune I shall have him whipped... *no, Photius, you don't have to write that*^[5]. As I was saying, I lie here suffering a most grievous sunburn, having spent the height of fire season mother-naked on the planes, a captive of the Bison people... *I won't warn you again Photius, show proper sympathy or I shall have your buttocks whipped even rawer than mine!* I cannot refer to my notebook: when I arrived at the Bison Tribe's camp, I was ushered into a tent provided for my comfort and put under the watchful gaze of one of the lesser khans. The illiterate fellow regarded my stylus and notebook with superstitious awe, and he almost certainly destroyed it after my arrest^[6].

I should have suspected something foul when, as we approached the camp, a group of Bison tribesmen lumbered out on their massive mounts - Bisons are second in strength only to the Rhinos, but a lot easier to tame and a much better provider of milk, skin, hair and sinew. Blooded braves they were, and their leader a Khan of the tribe, distinguished from the others by his peculiar headdress: a bone helmet, fashioned from a Bison skull and festooned with trinkets and trophies (including, I could not fail to notice, a human finger-bone with a crescent-shaped ring)^[7].

I was forced to cool my heels in the tent. The bison khan who escorted me into the camp sat sullenly outside, and made no attempt to answer my entreaties or even acknowledge my presence. Made of cow-hide, the tent stank horribly (even more so, what with my mule pushed in beside me!), but at least the door flap was open and I could observe all that was going on outside. I will now recount my observations of the Bison camp.

The camp was a large one, by bison standards, because these people were of the Skull Bat tribe, an important tribe of the Bison nation^[8]. The camp itself was arranged in the shape of a huge, stylised bull, and each tribal member domiciled in the appropriate place. Thus, the warriors of the tribe bivouacked in the "horns" of the bull, guarding the prisoners in the space in between. The Eiritha priestess's camped in its loins, the chief and his followers at its heart, and the tribal shaman at its liver, and so on. There was much activity going on in the camp, much of it related to the herd, but around the Eiritha priestess's location at the Bull's loins a large group of women - many of them wearing their hair in curious top-knots - were obviously rehearsing for one of their rituals.

The Bison people themselves seem to be of mixed blood, like all Praxians, with the height and build of Western folk, yet the sallow skin and inscrutable gaze of the Kralori. Their hair is invariably dark, and their men, clean shaven^[9]. As with all the Praxian nomads, the lives of the Bison folk centre around their herd, and all their clothing and food comes from

Floriat's Notes

[1] Despite his own reliance on Sor-Eel's station, Bor-Eel had a strict policy of only employing officials who had distinguished themselves in the Lunar bureaucracy by virtue of their talent, rather than birth. This made his department both efficiently unique and uniquely efficient.

[2] This fellow Gimгим was the subject of much rumour, and was later transferred back to the Empire - proper for unexplained security reasons. Never seen during the day, and only rarely in the evening, street-whispers linked him to Black Fang (and worse). Photius was a minor functionary on Gimгим's staff, who disappeared about the same time as his master.

[3] And those that ride them. Conversely, the Pol-Joni tribe, who ride the Marches on the Praxian border of Dragon Pass, are horsemen who despise the animal nomads. The canny Issaries traders ride betwixt them for their profit on mules: neither horses, nor herd-beasts.

[4] It pains me to think how Jaxarte could be so lacking in guile! It is obvious at a first reading that - despite his lofty title - Jaxarte was little more than a hostage, taken by the prudent Bison Khan to ensure against Lunar perfidy.

[5] The mere fact that Photius did suggests that he was not merely writing for Jaxarte's benefit: indeed, he had probably been ordered by his master Gimгим to debrief Jaxarte and extract all useful information from him.

[6] Jaxarte is incorrect if he is suggesting the Praxian nomads are unlettered. The Praxian language does in fact have a "written" form of sorts, used only among the priests, known as knot writing.

[7] "Blooded" braves are those that have "counted coup" against their enemies: that is, struck and killed a foe in battle. There are numerous variations and degrees of counting coup which Jaxarte could not hope to fathom. Depending on how and where the victim was struck, each is signified by how a brave's head feathers are worn. For example, an eagle feather denotes a scalp taken, a red-dotted feather an enemy killed (if the feather was notched, the enemy's throat had been cut), notches on one side of the feather shows that the brave was third to have touched the body; a stripped quill with a tuft fourth, and so on. I am indebted to the Pavis leatherworker Tokal of the Bison Hide, formerly a brave of the Death Bat Bison people, for this information.

[8] In fact, the Skull Bats were second in prominence only to the Bull's Blood tribe, whose leader, Akasta Ironspear, was paramount chief of the whole Bison nation.

[9] In fact, Bison tribe males practise depilation, from infancy. Do not let the city-soft Tokal's fine beard deceive you!

[10] The top-knot was sign that the maiden was nubile, yet unmarried. Bison women (and some men, notably shamans) grease their hair with rancid butter. Some braves in fact anoint their whole bodies in the stuff, because it is supposed to somehow confer the strength of the Bison Bull.

[11] When I put this curious detail to Tokal he explained that among the Bison people, marriages are forbidden during the period of mourning after the death of a chief, sometimes as long as five years! So, with a chief on his death-bed, marriage matches are quickly settled upon and consum-



mated, else the unlucky couples might be forced to wait a lengthy period.

[12] Praxians always treat their fellow people with respect, even if they have taken them as slaves. For they all share a common way-of-life and religion. Only foreign slaves are likely to be mistreated, because they are not people of Waha. Then again, the Praxians rarely keep "soft" foreign slaves, considering them a burden. They are usually sold or ransomed back to their own kind.

[13] The chief Oglala Red Knees, so-called for the mighty kicks he slew his enemies with in younger days. By now, he was about forty years old and dying. The naked man speaking for him was probably one of the tribal shamans (despite Jaxarte's description of him as a warrior).

[14] Tokal explained to me that guards are unnecessary by day, for none would dare risk an escape. However, at night, it is believed that the eye evaporates in the dark, and a vigilant watch must be posted.

[15] With this off-hand comment Jaxarte draws attention to a curious fact: the bestial morokanth are, in fact, bereft of thumbs, so presumably this particular morokanth had in its possession one of the fabled magic thumbs, given to the morokanth by Eiritha in legend as compensation.

[16] Rune lords of Waha are obliged to slay a thing of chaos once in their lifetime; however, they must make a pilgrimage to the Devil's Marsh to do so. Only the most impudent Khan would bring his own victim along with him, so one must presume the Khan's argument was just a malicious bargaining ploy.

[17] Jaxarte had called forth a lunc, the elemental force of the Red Goddess. He obviously mispronounced the summons, because the lunc manifested itself around him. Luncs have the power to drive their victims insane, sometimes for any days or weeks, sometimes permanently.

[18] According to Tokal, it is taboo for a Praxian to kill a madman, for they are blessed. This, and their reluctance to sell slaves to morokanth (except when the morokanth are acting as middle-men), probably saved Jaxarte's life, if he only knew it.

[19] Photius dutifully copies out the old census information which I transcribe here:
"It is estimated that there are approximately 80,000 Bison people divided into 7 major tribes. It is not possible to further breakdown population figures by tribe using current data.
"The major tribes of the Bison nation are, in order of precedence:

* Bull's Blood. The paramount tribe. Their leader, the outlaw Akasta Ironspear, is the great khan of the Bison People.

* Skull Bat. Also known as the Flower clan.

* Lance clan. The most severely depleted of the Bison tribes at Moonbroth, the Khan of the Lance People possesses the War Arrow, a medicine bundle of immense power. Thus, though reduced in number, this tribe still commands considerable prestige.

* Midnight. Their tribal totem is the Raven, a darkness spirit. Their ways and customs somewhat set them apart from the rest of the Bison People.

their cherished beasts (or those they can capture from their nomadic rivals).

As nightfall came, my Khan allowed a buck-skinned maiden to enter my tent, bearing a bowl of mush, made it appear from skullbush seeds... *yes, Photius, the same stuff that now swathes my tender body, pray let me continue...* The girl was rosy-cheeked and slender but her long raven hair, wound back into the large knot I had seen earlier, was plastered with oily fat and stank most foul [10].

The girl left without speaking, and as Yelm sank, the Khan began to lace me into the tent, mule and all! That night, there was obviously a tribal celebration of some sort going on, yet I dared not peek through the gap between the tent and floor... *No Photius, you wouldn't either if you knew what Bison people are said to do to those who profane their rituals!* When I asked uncle about this yesterday, he told me that a trader had said the rites I heard (but not saw) were apparently a curious mixture of a mass marriage and funeral rites for the old chief. This surprised me, because I knew at that time the old chief was still alive: I saw him the following morning! [11]

The following morning the Sable Riders arrived in camp, and I was brought out from my tent to see them. It intrigued me that they were accompanied by a small Lunar escort, similarly mounted on Sables. These regular soldiers prudently chose not to approach the camp, and although they were regularly goaded by the Bison youngsters, remained aloof on a small rise. I marvelled at their composure. The Sable-riders had brought a coffle of Bison men and women, none of whom looked especially mistreated, despite having walked all the way from the Sable camp just outside Pavis. [12]

The leader of the Sable-riders, obviously a Khan (though wearing the gaudy silver crescent often given to barbarian converts, and wearing the most unlikely Kostaddian silk trousers) disdained to dismount, preferring to carry on the negotiations in the saddle. Opposite him, the Bison people's chief, obviously sick and dying, lay swathed in a huge bundle of skins. He spoke in a barely audible croak, which was promptly amplified by a naked, oiled brave festooned with feathers and other trophies, who stood at his shoulder [13].

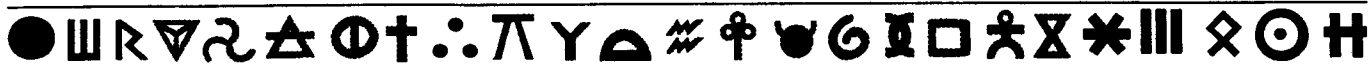
The negotiations dragged on for many hours, until Yelm reached his peak, and the air shimmered with the heat. I was not called upon to officiate, which galled me, and to my surprise, about an hour after noon, the Sable priestess (an old woman, who interestingly enough, I had seen helping instruct the younger women the day before in their dancing) was produced. She promptly leapt onto the back of the Khan's sable with a spryness remarkable for her age, and they were gone. Only then was my presence before the chief required. The khan thrust me forward, and the naked warrior beside the enfeebled chief asked me, in flawless New Pelorian... *no, Photius, I don't know where he learned Lunar...* where was this great treasure the governor had promised them in exchange for the Sable Queen? I begged leave to return to my tent, and came back with the curious metal box uncle had given me on my departure. The box was very light, and obviously did not contain a "great treasure" in the usual sense. Dutifully, I handed it to my Khan, who delivered it to the naked speaker. He immediately tore open the box, and removed the only thing inside it: a roll of parchment. I don't know who was more incredulous: he or I.

"What says this?", asked the speaker, more bemused than angry, though he flung the box away. Obviously whoever taught him to speak Lunar never taught him to read! The note was returned to me, and I began to read it, aloud.

What was this "great treasure"? To my shock I found that in return for the Sable Queen, uncle was merely granting the dying Chief Red Knees a pardon for his rebellious acts at the battle of Moonbroth, and a guarantee of a safe escort back into the wastes of Vulture's Country! What's more, the Lunar Sable cavalry (who had not moved from the rise, even after the Sable Riders had departed) were to form this escort!

At this, the speaker lost his composure, and even the enfeebled chief rose partway from his blankets to spit a curse at me. A band of braves ran for their mounts and thundered out of the encampment, their wives running to their tents and dragging out their lances for them to take up as they rode through. I know not whether they were striking out after the liberated Sable Queen or against the unwanted escort on the rise, for at that moment I was roughly seized and flung to the ground. Whoever the braves were after, I did not see the Sable Queen again, and the Sable escort (or another band like it) appeared on the hillock next morning.

Despite my protests, they trussed me up like a prized mutton and carried me away. I was dumped with the rest of the prisoners at the fringe of the camp. One of the brutes grinned evilly as he whipped a saw-toothed knife from his belt - I gasped for the goddess - but it was



only to cut the leather thongs binding me. Wrist and ankles raw, I struggled to my feet. I was in the space between the "horns" of the "bull", its borders crudely etched in the dust by the bare foot of one of the priests. Hacked into the centre was the image of an immense lidded eye, from which the rest of the captives averted their gaze. I was amazed to see that, despite the fact that no-one was paying particular attention to us, none of the prisoners dared attempt to break out, despite the safe walls of Pavis shimmering in the heat haze of the distance. Only by night did the khans order a watchful guard stake out the perimeter. [14]

It was on the third day that I began to worry: the Bison riders were obviously preparing to break camp. I must surely have been missed back in Pavis: where was uncle? On the fourth day my worry turned to desperation: a band of morokanth appeared at the edge of the camp, and were led by our captors into the circle. My fear arose as I watched these inhuman brutes bargain and pay for (in salted mock-pork) the pick of the prisoners. As they were taken away, bound and bawling for mercy, the Khan led two other morokanth to me. While one clumsily poked me in the ribs and the other used a grimy thumb to inspect my teeth^[15], I decide I must make my dash for freedom. I found myself the subject of an obscene haggle: the morokanth obviously wanted me - "good stud beast", one lisped in appalling Pavic - but the Khan was reluctant to sell me at any price. The reason? Once in a Khan's life he must slay a thing of chaos: as a Lunar, the fool reasoned, I would be it! [16]

Fingering my moonstone pendant (a gift from mother on my initiation-day), I struggled free from the clubbed paws of the morokanth and began reciting the incantation. Even as I attempted to dodge past the bellowing Khan the rock began to pulse deep red. It was my plan to make the lune cause mayhem in the camp, and then escape across the plain to the Sable cavalry on the hill in the confusion. I had never called forth nor seen a lunar elemental before, and struggled to recall the incantation. As the moonstone crumbled to dust in my fingers, my vision blurred into a rapturous swath of the deepest crimson... [17]

Of the next weeks, I cannot recall much at all, save fleeting images of sweltering sun, a dryness in my throat, and pain, pain, pain! ...*No Photius, I can't be more specific, and please don't ask again... My next clear memory is standing on the slave block at Adari, subjected to the hoots and whistles of the crowd. The same Bison Khan who had treated me cruelly was selling me! Why they hadn't just killed me in their camp I shall never understand, nor why they didn't just sell me off to the morokanth (who, I understand, herd humans for their meat!)* [18]. I am thankful that one of uncle's agents... *No, Photius, I will not identify him for your benefit... was in Adari at the time and had the necessary funds to free me.*

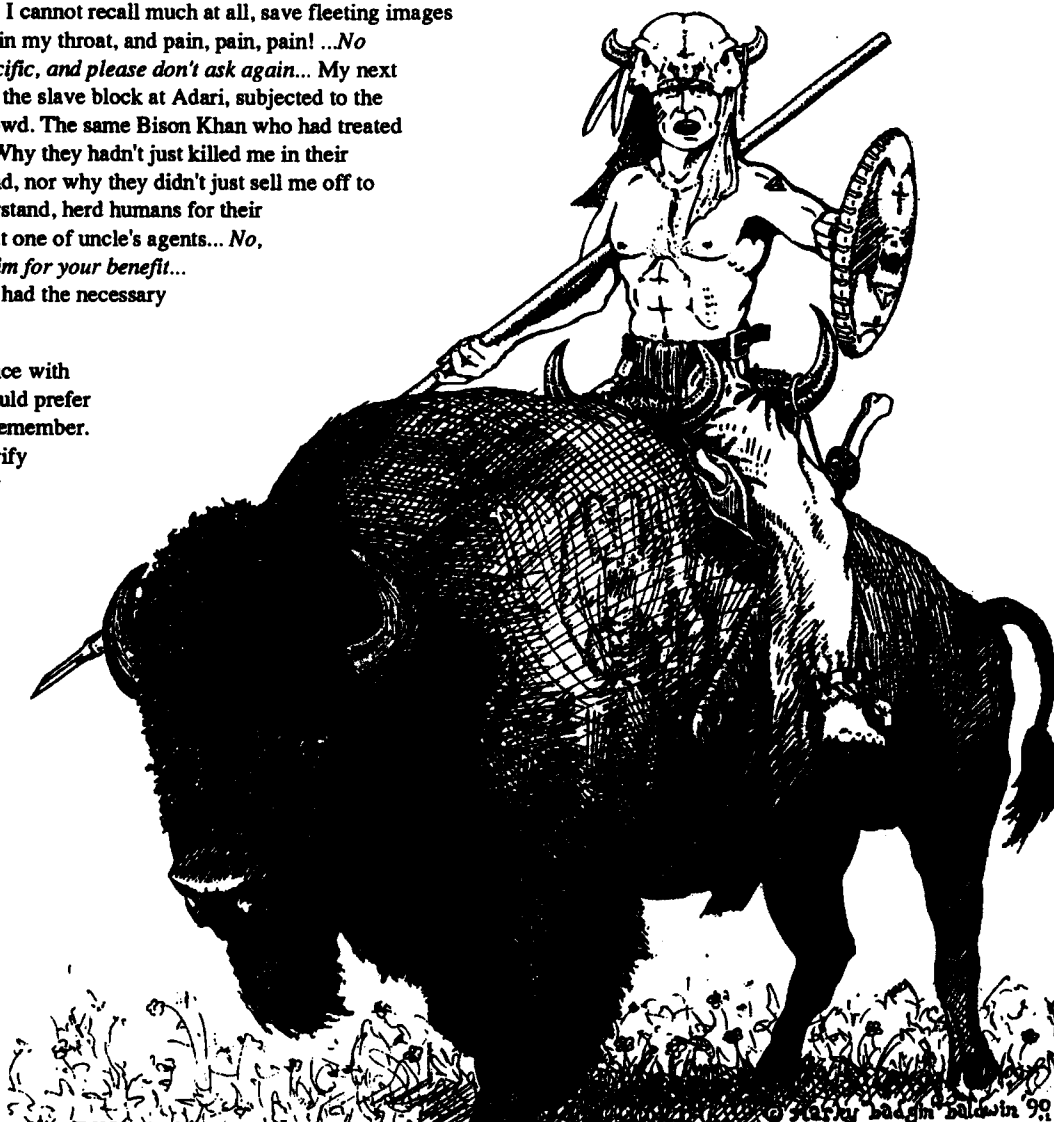
In all, my experience with the Bison People is one I would prefer to put aside and not care to remember. I was of course unable to verify the census figures during my brief stay at the Bison camp, and will get Photius to transcribe the relevant figures from earlier records^[19].

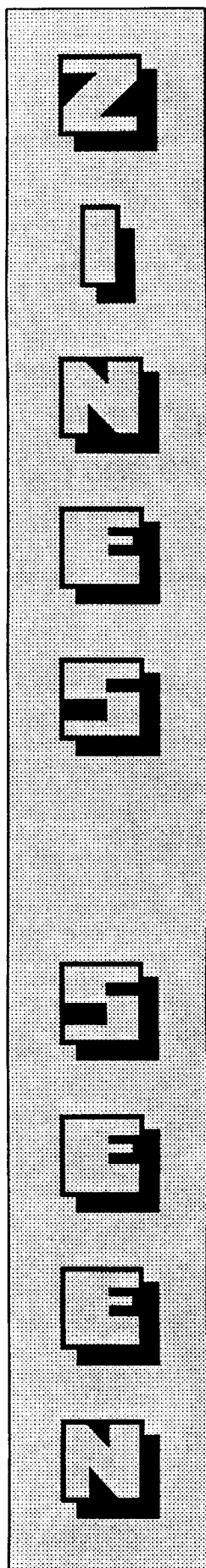
Leave me now Photius - I must rest. Go now and fetch those figures on the Bison People from the old census. I must lie here and ponder the next assignment uncle wishes me to carry out for him: he wants me to revise the population figures we have on the inhuman Morokanth: I can't say I look forward to carrying out this task with any enthusiasm, given my recent experience with these brutes!

* Sword Clan. This grouping is a recent creation, and is held together by religious rather than family ties - members have come from almost all the other tribes. The Sword Clan are sworn to drive the Lunar presence from Prax.

* Death Bat. Their Eiritha Queen possesses one of the Horns of Plenty. "The Bison nation are, as a whole, antagonistic towards Lunars. Many of their khans and leaders have been outlawed. At this stage it is recommended that missionary activities be limited to those Bison people present within the confines of New Pavis, and that trading contacts between Lunars and Bison tribesmen be severely restricted."

NEXT TIME: Jaxarte and the Chaos-fiend!





Our regular zine review has a distinctly continental flavour this issue. You've never had it so good ! (if you speak French, that is...)

From Jean-Louis Bernard:

QUEST No 4

March/April 1991, A4, 66pp, 30 Francs.

This French magazine is the only one, to my knowledge, to have a Gloranthan Duck as the editor. Every issue features a scenario and/or an article for RuneQuest. This issue contains an interview of Malcolm Mitchell (the president of TSR UK), a review of the French translation of Cyberpunk, a scenario, review and a comic strip for Call of Cthulhu, a description of the cult of Atyar for RuneQuest, two scenarios for Shadowrun and Stormbringer, a Warhammer article, and a scenario for In Nomine Satanis/Magna Veritas (a French roleplaying game in which you play angels and demons fighting on the earth of the 20th century).

In earlier issues you can find an interview of Greg Stafford (#1), a long Runequest scenario each issue and some rules articles (Trollball, aerial fighting, relative encumbrance etc...), and in #1 and #3, comic strips of the famous Gloranthan adventures of Danold the Duck. This is a good magazine, full of jokes and humour, and will make you regret you cannot read French! In issue 5, there is a 9 pages scenario set in Dorastor, and the third episode of the saga of Danold the Duck. Contact: QUEST, 14 rue crozatier, 75012 PARIS, FRANCE.

TATOU No 7

March/April 1991, A4, 48pp. 40 Francs.

This French magazine is analogous to Games Workshop's White Dwarf. It is the magazine of Oriflam, the French company which has translated RuneQuest. It is totally devoted to the products of Oriflam: Hawkmoon, Stormbringer, Cyberpunk, and of course RuneQuest. There is no publicity but only scenarios and game aids for their products. The illustrations are, of course, up to the usual high standard of Oriflam. In this issue, you'll find an article on alchemy in RuneQuest and a scenario, a scenario for Hawkmoon, two articles and a scenario for Stormbringer, and finally a scenario for Cyberpunk. In every issue there are articles and scenarios for RuneQuest, sometimes translations, but usually by French authors. Unfortunately, this magazine is not published very regularly.

If you don't fancy waiting for 6 months for the next issue, you'd better ask for back issues, especially issues 1 to 4 in which you'll find more Runequest material (#3 has a very nice map and guide to Bold-home). Contact: ORIFLAM, 132 Rue de Marly, 57158 Montigny-lès-Metz, FRANCE.

From de Ed:

Broos No 6

June 1991, A4, 60pp, 30 Francs.

The latest issue of this French RuneQuest fanzine has just come out after a long delay. In fact it is rumoured that issue #7 will be their last. Contents include the cult of Gark the Calm, part one of The Smell of a Rat by Alan LaVergne, the Lunar province of First Blessed (with the obligatory superb map), Sorcery rules, and a further instalment of their Lunar campaign. I just wish I could read French! Contact: Association Broos, chez Mr Frederic Weil, 19 rue Dumeril, 75013 PARIS.

Black Knight No 1

August 1991, A5, 46pp, £1.50.

A new UK RPG zine. It has articles on live-role playing, postal gaming, AD&D and Top Secret scenarios, short stories, and the Greydog Inn from Tales #5. At the back is a useful contacts section for zines, shops and other RPG related companies. Their issue two is likely to feature my mate Hayward from Tales #1. Contact: Angela Timms, 125 Maybank Road, South Woodford, London, E18 1EJ.

Grey Ooze No 1

June 1991, A5ish, 43pp, 35 Krona.

This is a very well produced Swedish fanzine, edited by one Jussi Hyvonen, who just happens to be "our man in Sweden". It has scenarios for RuneQuest (set in Sartar), Call of Cthulhu & AD&D, an article on the Swedish SCA, a review of a Swedish horror RPG called Kult, a conversion table for Imperial to Metric measures (!), a short story for Palladium (in English), and an NPC for Warhammer.

With my 2% Read Swedish it looks very good. The artwork is terrific. Contact: Jussi Hyvonen at the address on page one.

PerChance No 5

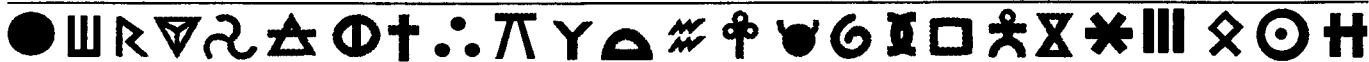
May 1991, A5, 31pp, 70p.

This has recently arrived. It seems to be a vampire special with a generic scenario, fiction, vampires in Cthulhu and an RQ vampire NPC write-up (with a really groovy rune banner, that somehow seems familiar...). There's also a useful discussion of shields in RuneQuest. Contact: Jim Johnson, 44 Hillcrest Drive, Doagh Road, BT36 6EQ.

Cosmorama No 3

July 1991, A4, 40 pp, £1.50.

This is an excellent comic strip fanzine produced by Garen Ewing. This disappeared without trace a while back and it is good to see it return. There are seven comic strips: Scifi, fantasy, comic and strange. And an appreciation of Tintin and his creator Herge. Not much RQ, but I like it! Contact: King Rat Comics, 93 Sackville Gardens, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 2AR.



Tim Minas, Southampton

Humakt is not just the nice Orlanthe style cult we all know and love! That's a Dragon Pass/Pavis orientated view. There he is indeed a chaos fighting Orlanthe cult. But that is much more a social thing than a universal aspect. In Dorastor, for instance, there is an entire Humakti regiment of Broos, Scorpionmen, Ogres etc., and all are entirely valid Humakti. No where does it say Humakt hates chaos...! Also, in the Kingdom of War, guess who is worshipped as the chief god in the leading state in this "enemy kingdom"?

Now to Ruined Quest:

Simon Phipp, Coventry

The pontifications of the Tales Team on the fortunes of RuneQuest was four pages of waffle (I am too polite to say "drivel"). Fair enough, as people associated with a RuneQuest magazine, you have every right to express your opinion on the current state of RuneQuest, but did you need to review all RQ3 material? However I do agree with the gist of the article, that RuneQuest is too good a game, and Glorantha too good a world, to lose. So let's give Avalon Hill a

kick up the backside and get the game going again.

Mark Galeotti, Hampton Wick

I agree with the main thrust. RQ has been allowed to drift, for reasons well-known, in a time of intense competition, where not only have new games appeared, but the whole art of RPG promotion has been carried forward (particularly by FASA). If Avalon Hill continue to try and market it as if it were a hexgrid wargame, then it is hard to see how it can reclaim its former position.

Jamie Keith MacLaren, Newmarket

It is on the subject of reprints that I must disagree, reprints certainly should not take a back seat. Supplements such as Borderlands, Pavis and Big Rubble are becoming increasingly difficult to obtain, and this can only harm the RQ market. Also the RuneQuest products that remain unconverted are looking very dated, despite their quality. These products would be greatly enhanced if pro-

duced with the care and attention to detail seen in more recent Chaosium products. However if The Haunted Ruins is a measure of the upgrade standard then it would be best not to bother. How so many unconverted second edition points could make it to print is beyond my comprehension (*Ed - not to mention the omission of the North Section map, and the complete history of the Temple of the Wooden Sword!*). We must remember that our position is a privileged one, we have read many now unpublished sources, including most importantly the second edition rules. But, how can we expect the casual players to grasp the basics of Glorantha with access to only the third edition?

The wish for reprints of the old supplements was echoed a number of times. There is certainly an opportunity for a whole campaign, background and scenarios, to be furnished with the publication of these supplements, and, of course, Praxpak - which would be the basis of such a campaign. Unfortunately I've had no response from Avalon Hill about the article. In fact I'm still waiting for a promised complimentary copy of Daughters of Darkness. But then the authors are waiting too! I suggest that any further comments are directed to Avalon Hill.

**Oliver
Dickinson's**

Chaotic Feature Competition



Chaotic features - don'cha hate 'em? They ought to be a way of expressing the often bizarre randomness of chaos, but too often in scenarios they appear as extra beneficial abilities for chaotic creatures. Even the spell Chaos Feature offers only a choice between the standard table (largely beneficial) and the Curse of Thed table (largely harmful, and often inapplicable as a permanent feature). Of course they need not be the only way of individualising creatures like broos whose appearance is highly variable anyway; but I would like to see some much more original and weird ideas than often appear (the chaotic gangs in the Big Rubble are exception, though many of their features are effectively beneficial).

With this in mind, I ask for entries for the most unusual chaotic feature(s) you have devised, encountered, or can imagine. Those considered the best will be published in the zine and awarded a prize!

First Prize: A copy of Apple Lane or Snakepipe Hollow, autographed by Greg Stafford.

Second Prize: A copy of the New Stafford Compendium, autographed by Greg Stafford.

The results will be presented in issue eight - a Chaos Feature!

Lunar ‘Dart Competitions’



By Greg Stafford

Civilization or Decadence?

One of Harrek the Berserk’s most strident protestations against the empire was their practice of internal assassination and warfare called “Dart Competitions.” The name comes from the ancient sport which was popular in the first wane among Lunar nobility. When Gargron of Carrish used poison darts and a drunken “mishrow” to eliminate a rival for a posh administrative position in 1/49 the practice began. Within the wane it had spread and developed into a very sophisticated form of private warfare, popular among all the aristocracy.

Development of the dart competitions was along several lines of interest, but all of them included the aristocracy itself as the targets and agents. There were public spectator-type events, sometimes with champions of the noble clans fighting each other, or with nobles fighting, or with trained agents fighting nobility. These affairs were very popular with the citizenry, even though the formality and ritual combat often went on for hours or days before any blood was shed.

Much more deadly and in earnest were the “secret games”. Again the aristocracy were the targets of these operations. The most secret magical agents were used, although cruder methods (such as hiring Harrek) were occasionally necessary. The result of this legitimate violence was to keep the most ambitious and powerful of the empire truly upon their toes at all times. This continual honing of the Lunar aristocrat-magicians kept the clans in a state of constant readiness for any sudden magical or physical assault. It also wiped out a couple of less fortunate noble houses. The Emperor is known to have been killed once in Dart Competition. Lavish amounts of money were spent upon buying, raising, or otherwise preparing special agents. During the sixth wane, when peace prevailed through most of the Empire, some provinces spent up to 85% of their entire military budget on their Dart Competitors. Some of these persons grew quite famous during their own lifetimes, even in the colourful and jaded Lunar courts.

The beauty of these expensive competitions was that they were the sole means available for the powerful and often volatile Lunar sorcerers to vent their emotional release upon worthy targets: each other. Rather than spending all the money to raise large armies of peasants or freemen to fight for the whims of the rulers, the rulers instead hired very special and elite forces to wage private war at public expense, but not at public destruction. Thus, although a noble clan might fall from power through the bloody grudges of another family, the trade of the sultanate would still pass unhindered, the cities would not be sieged or the fields burned. The Emperor had begotten a special deity whose province it was to punish any individual and their clan who might use their dart competitors upon inferior targets, or to punish a noble who used some means other than the dart competitions against each other. This spirit was sometimes referred to as the “Tax Fury”, since it interfered with the nobles only if the Emperor’s taxes were ever interfered with.

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A few examples of dart competitions from published sources held in the Temple of Knowledge in Nochet City:

“...such was the reasoning behind the unfortunate hire of Harrek by the Taran-Il clan of First Blessed. However, in Oraya the most famous member of that corps was called Chain Dancer. He never acted improperly, nor was he ever seen to make a mistake, and so he lived to a ripe old age. Yet every movement of his was said to be a part of a magical enchantment taught by Hon-eel in a dream. The result of the dance was the birth of a woman, Farangold, who was Jar-eel’s terrestrial mother. In Kostaddi the Feathered Eye Girl was...”

From “Conflict and Conflagration”, a brief history of Dart competitions by Trebor Sevrage.

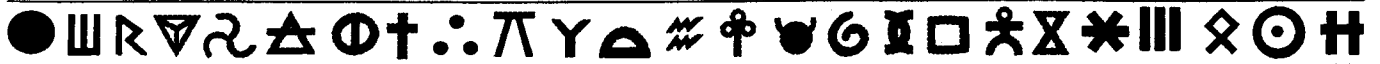
“In the Silver Shadow sultanate the gladiators of Glamour participate in week or season-long duels for the amusement of the populace. It is often claimed that the betting on these contests is “equal in value to a barbarian kingdom”.”

From “A Rough Guide to Peloria”, by Opalambus Phog.

“Tragically the last heiress of this noble household fell to an assassin whilst out shopping for mangoes in Oarz-upon-the-Joat. It is recorded that in a fit of remorse and shame three full companies of her bodyguard fell upon their swords...”

From “By Arir to Doblian”, the history of Doblian, by Tropidas Specillivantates.





Carving Up Carver



By Oliver Dickinson

Very few people care to be around Storm Bulls much and I am not one of them, so when Carver Donan pops up in front of me one morning when I am laying into one of Bob's Bison-burgers and doing a little handicapping, it is not surprising that my reaction is somewhat marked. In fact, I swallow a piece the wrong way, and he gives me a great whack on the back to stop me choking, and by the time he has me up and dusted off I am feeling all shook up and am able to give him no more than a very hoarse hello.

This Carver Donan is a big, muscular guy from away down south and west, where folks are not very civilised, and because he wants more action than he can get stealing the next tribe's sheep he goes a-wandering and fetches up in Pavis. He is still a fairly young guy, but already he has quite a reputation for mayhem, and few citizens want any part of him, for he carries a great big blade that is like an overgrown butcher's knife, and he gets his nickname from what he likes to do with the blade when he gets excited, and Carver Donan can get excited very easily. He is not such a guy as is extra strong in the brains department, in fact he joins the Storm Bulls before he even reaches Pavis, and for my money joining the Storm Bulls at any time is a triple guarantee that you are dumb. But this is a point of view which I keep strictly to myself, for Storm Bulls are apt to be very touchy about such comments, and it is well known that they do not care a bent clack for the law, especially when the Lunars are administering it, and will jump you in a moment if they feel they have cause to, and let the future take care of itself.

But Carver is all right when he is sober, and I always give him a hello, for I believe in keeping in with all such characters, and he has some time for me, because I once put him in the way of making a little dough in the fight game. In this man's town there are many guys, and dolls too, who will bet on anything down to which of two birds will fly off a roof first, and this only shows how dumb people can get, for where is the sense in betting on a bird if you know nothing of its previous performance? So naturally such persons will bet on fights, and there are also persons who love to watch fights, and so some enterprising characters see a way to make some dough by hiring fighters to put on a show in a discreet location out of town and handling bets. Usually only adventurers who are very desperate will consider this, and they rarely last long, because such fights must be serious or the public will not be interested. But Carver hangs up quite a record before he has to retire because the promoters can get no one to take him on, and moreover can make nothing by bets because Carver is the public's favourite. But Carver is not dismayed at having to retire, but just goes on with his life, doing this and that. "Well, well," he says, "here you are at last. I am looking for you all over." He does not say this in such a way as to suggest that he wishes me harm, so I relax and ask what I can do for him.

"You are spoken of here and there as one who knows almost as much about Griselda as she does," he says, "and I wish to

find her, so tell me where she is likely to be right now." "Well, this is the kind of question I never like to answer, since I do not wish anyone to think I am putting the finger on them, but this time I have an easy way out.

"Nobody knows where Griselda is, Carver," I say. "Since she and Wolfhead do their disappearing act I must hear a hundred stories of where they are, and I know nothing to prove any one of these stories."

"Then I know more than you do," he says. "My cult gets word two nights ago from the Pavis temple, asking if we will forgive and forget being cheated over that chart in return for our money back, being as Griselda and the rest are carrying out such doughty deeds against Chaos. It seems that the Pavis temple is sponsoring them now. But we are not going to let the matter go so easy, and I am looking for them since, and especially Griselda, who figures to be the brains behind the whole scam."

"Well, Carver," I say, "this is all news to me, and I do not suppose you want any advice, but I will give you some free, gratis, and for nothing. Try to cross the Troll Bridge, or take over the Mint, or get to the centre of the Puzzle Canal, but do not tangle with Griselda, for she makes a sucker of some very tough characters here and there and if you hit her you will likely break your arm."

"Oh phooey!" says Carver. "Who sees her do half what is claimed? No, in my book she is just a smart little doll with an exaggerated reputation, as I aim to show, and besides, I am bound and determined to avenge my cult's honour." And off he goes, and for once, though I generally like to be around when Griselda is involved in any action, I find I have no wish to follow, since either she or Carver is likely to suffer permanent damage and I am unwilling to witness this. Instead I go to Lilina's, figuring that Carver must already look in there, and tell the company that Griselda is reported back in town, and what else I hear from Carver, and this is news of interest to one and all.

It is maybe an hour later when who steps through the door but Rowdy Djoh Lo, which is most unusual, though he and Loud Lilina are believed to think well of one another at one time and only to part company over where to set up business. He is looking a little strained, and also sounds it, for he says, "Give us a mug for old times' sake, Lilli. I just close up my joint after what comes off there and step uptown to relax.

"Lilina draws him a mug and says, "Rest your mind, Djoh boy. What happens that makes you so nervous?" and we all quieten down to listen. "You all hear that Griselda is back?" he says. "Well, she drops by like she is never away, claims it is her first chance to get a drink without some kind of priest breathing down her neck. She is looking a shade thinner than last time I see her, but otherwise is in

