

# The POPYRUS #3

This time we welcome our first outside contributions. From Steve Jackson Games' computer bulletin board, two new races for GURPS Fantasy, and from Ragnarok Enterprises, Necropolis of Dreams, computer bulletin board, some background and history of the world of Uttgart. Enjoy.

## Tabaxi Addendum —

The following information is in addition to that found in POPYRUS #1 concerning the Fiend Folio's Tabaxi as a character race.

The average adult male grows to 6.5 feet and will usually weight about 223lbs.

One of the variant Tabaxi races exists on the "Known World" (D&D campaign) and can be transposed into any campaign. This race, known as the Rakasta, differs only slightly from the Tabaxi. The only immediately noticeable difference is their lack of strips, causing them to resemble cougars vice tigers.

Unlike the Tabaxi, Rakasta make their home in the desert. They live in large caravans of up to fifty individuals. Nomads by nature, their culture is very similar to that of the Bedouins who live in the Middle East and North Africa.

When the caravans stop to set up camp, colorful tents are pitched. The insides of these tents are normally decorated with silk rugs and brass ornaments. Rakasta are very fond of silks, bright colors and precious stones.

Rakasta warriors ride giant sabre-tooth tigers with special saddle and harness that doesn't restrict the big cats' fighting abilities and allows the rider to dismount by leaping over his cat's head (up to 20'). Although they are considered tame, these sabre-tooths will not tolerate non-rakasta riders. For weapons the Rakasta warriors prefer the scimitar and spear. Armor is always light and small, round shields are common.

Rakasta females are required to remain veiled in public. They are considered a commodity and the polygamist males collect them as a sign of wealth and power. The only respected, and feared, females are those that attain high priestess-

hood in the Rakasta religion.

AD&D players can use a Rakasta character exactly as they would a Tabaxi (see POPYRUS #1). Obvious changes are easily accomplish, revising the Ranger class for a desert environment for example. The only other change occurs in clerics. Rakasta priests have all black coats, thereby resembling panthers. Unlike their Tabaxi counterparts they normally remain within a caravan, although hermits and wanderers are not unknown.

D&D players can use Rakasta or Tabaxi characters by adopting the following:

- they advance and resolve combat as per halflings.
- they possess thief skills, with adjustments as per POPYRUS #1 article.

DragonQuest players will note slight differences in the Tabaxi (POPYRUS #2) and the Rakasta (below). These can be ignored as they are minor and will not affect play. DragonQuest stats follow:

Name: RAKASTA (CAT-MEN)  
Natural Habitat: Desert  
Frequency: very rare      Number:  
3-30 + 1-8 sabre-tooths  
Description: Nomadic, cat-like humanoids. They walk erect, much like humans, but are covered with soft, tawny fur and have feline heads and features.  
Talents, Skills, and Magic: Ranger, Thief, Beastmaster  
Movement Rates: 200 running  
PS: 22-25 MD: 24-30 AG: 24-30 MA: None  
EN: 19-30 FT: 24-33 WP: 6-25 PC: 18-25  
PB: 7-10 TMR: 8  
NA: Fur absorbs 2 DP.  
Weapons: Any, or claw/claw/bite up to rank 7, doing -3/-3/-5.  
Reference: Quoted from D&D module X1, "The Isle of Dread", page 30.



# M ore Inter-game System Creature Conversions

RACE	GAME SYSTEM	DESCRIPTION	AD&D EQUIV	RECOMMENDED MODIFICATIONS
BROO	RUNEQUEST	RAM HEADED AND HOOFED CHAOS BEINGS	URISK (LUBIN): CREATURE CATALOG II, DR94 pg52 or SATYR	ALIGNMENT: CHAOTIC (EVIL), SIZE: MEDIUM. FOR SATYR: ADD GOAT HEAD AND BUTT ATTACK (1-6), NO ASSOCIATION WITH DRYADS OR AFFINITY TO HUMAN FEMALES.
CAROCS	INVINCIBLE OVERLORD	HUMANOID GATOR	LIZARD MAN	HAVE ALIGATOR-LIKE HEAD, TAIL AND SKIN. ALIGNMENT: NEUTRAL EVIL, ATTACKS: 2 (BITE/TAIL SLASH); 1D8/2D6 OR 1 (BY WEAPON).
DASSLAR (GURKPERI)	INVINCIBLE OVERLORD	HUMANOID AMPHIBIAN	BULLYWUG	NONE.
FELINE	FANTASY HERO	CAT-LIKE HUMANOID	TABAXI	LIVE ON PLAINS VICE JUNGLE. MAY NOT BE STRIPED.
JACKALMAN	QUEST FOR GLORY II	JACKAL-LIKE HUMANOID	GNOLL	JACKAL-LIKE VICE HYENA-LIKE IN APPERANCE.
KATTA	QUEST FOR GLORY II	FELINE-LIKE HUMANOIDS	TABAXI	NO STRIPES, COME FROM ARID REGIONS, HAVE ADOPTED HUMAN HABITS. GIFTED ARTISANS AND TALENTED MERCHANTS.
KRUGEL	D&D HOLLOW WORLD	ORC	ORC	MONGOL HORDE-LIKE SOCIETY, RIDE BIPED REPTILES.
LIONTAURS	QUEST FOR GLORY II	CROSS BETWEEN HUMAN AND LION	WEMIC	NONE.
MUNCHKIN	WIZARD OF OZ	SHORT MISSHAPEN HUMANOIDS	GNOME	NONE.
OM-BA-DON	"THE CHRONICLES OF KRYSTONIA"	LARGE CAMEL HEADED HUMANOID	MINOTAUR	COAT IS WOLLY, HEAD LIKE CAMEL, LIVE IN MOUNTAINOUS, ARCTIC CONDITIONS. CHAOTIC GOOD. FAVOR BATTLE AXE.
ORC-MEN	INVINCIBLE OVERLORD	ORC/HUMAN HYBRED	HALF-ORC	NONE.
RAKASTA	D&D EXPERT	CAT-LIKE HUMANOID	TABAXI	COLORATION, TAWNY WITHOUT STRIPS. DESERT NOMADS IN THE CLASSICAL ARABIAN TRADITION. RIDE SABRE-TOOTH TIGERS, USE METAL CLAWS TO INCREASE ATTACK DAMAGE TO 1-4/CLAW.
SAURSEN	YSGARTH	HUMAN-LIKE LIZARDS	LIZARD MEN	SHORTER THAN AVG MAN, 1HD. PREFERED WEAPON IS LONG KNIFE WITH SMALL ROUND SHIELD. GOOD BUSINESSMEN. MAY BE FOUND IN DESERT OR SWAMP.
TELKHAR	YSGARTH	CANINE HUMANOID.	GNOLL	GREY-GREEN LEATHERY SKIN, SEMI-WEBBED HANDS AND FEET. LARGE, FLOPPY EARS.

## FANTASY FOLK 1

Updated 2-11-90

A Collection of Fantasy Races for GURPS, downloaded from Steve Jackson Games' free computer bulletin board, (512)447-4449.

All the creatures listed here are unofficial, submitted by your fellow fans and BBSers. Some are unlicensed conversions of material from various sources; others are original. All are credited to the person who submitted them, under whatever name he/she uses.

These races were designed before work on GURPS FANTASY FOLK started, so any compatibility with the rules in that book is pure coincidence.

### PROOTWADDLES (-55 points)

Translated from TFT to GURPS by Steffan O'Sullivan

In TFT, Prootwaddles are called diminutive, yet have a much higher ST than Halflings. Therefore, I reduced ST by only 1, but reduced height for their ST by 1 foot. The stats are as follows:

-1 ST (-10 pts)

-4 IQ (-30 pts)

Stubbornness (-5 pts)

All mental skills cost double (-5 pts.)

-1 reaction from everybody, just because. (-5 pts)

TOTAL: -55 pts.

A Prootwaddle is allowed one more Disadvantage if desired: an Odious Personal Habit.

An average prootwaddle is built on -30 points, and hero material starts at 0 points, which is where a PC Proot could begin.

Here is the PC I played (who has earned 7 experience points in two sessions since then!).

Duffle (Prootwaddle) - Total 0 points

ST 11, DX 13, IQ 6, HT 10 (50 points) Basic Speed: 7, Move: 5, PD/DR 2/2 (w/shield: 5/2)

Dodge: 5, Parry: 7, Block: 3

Ads, Disads, Quirks:

Prootwaddle, Stubborn\*, -1 reaction\*, Odious Personal Habit:

Repeats whatever other party members say in a high, squeaky voice, Nyah! Acute Hearing +1.

Quirks: Yells "Proot" in battle. Likes to disguise himself. Likes to sing and jump. Likes Money and thinks being a mercenary is wonderful. Wants to see everything in the whole, wide world! (-73 points)

Skills: Polearms (15), Axe/Mace (14), Climbing (12), Stealth (12), Running (10), Disguise (5), Singing (9), Swimming (12), Jumping (14) (23 points)

He carries a Glaive, Fine Hatchet, Medium Shield, Leather armor, Cloak, Small pack, Personal Basics (somebody gave it to him, honest!), Rope, food, torches, water.

He is a stout fighter, though easily distracted. His main solution to any problem is to disguise himself as one of the enemy (orcs, ogres, wolves - he'll try it all!) and gather information. If the party doesn't restrain him, he'll do it on his own. One of the most common lines he says is: "Psst! Fellas! Don't shoot! It's really me, Duffle, in disguise! I'm going to check out the orc camp!".

Once he actually did make his Disguise roll and the party let him go spy on the hobgoblins. Lack of the correct language prevented any useful information gathering, alas!

For those that wonder how to roleplay a Prootwaddle, I offer more of the story of Duffle:

When Duffle couldn't get any useful information out of the hobgoblins, he decided he didn't want to appear a failure in the eyes of the party. So he came back and told them the hobgoblins were afraid of the party and were running away. Since the GM had told me the truth (Duffle had no idea what they were planning) in secret, the party chose to believe me, even though they KNEW that I like to roleplay accurately. I mean, c'mon, the guy's DUMB!

Well, we walked into a horrible trap (Duffle had come to believe his own story - he likes to think that enemies are afraid of



him), but somehow we managed to survive.

Next, the party put him on rear guard duty, for some reason, when the GM slipped me a note saying Duffle spotted a hobgoblin to our rear. Of course the party chose not to believe him (they thought the rear was swept of enemies - I guess they never heard of secret passages. Maybe his low IQ roll to spot anything also had something to do with it). They tried to convince Duffle he was wrong, but of course he's stubborn, so they had to tell him about all the MONEY that was waiting ahead, and to forget the rear, so he did, totally. So we were ambushed from the rear.

I think most of us survived, but we didn't get the treasure we were after, and they have the NERVE to blame Duffle!

Now, I think it's unfair that they won't let me play Duffle anymore - what do you think? Anybody out there want an adventuring companion? He's a stout fighter, and is putting all his points into Disguise . . .

*PAPYRUS note: AD&D players can use: Halflings, Kender or Gully Dwarves?*



SIDHAI (pronounced "Sith-EYE")

29 points

by Bob Schroeck

2-28-89

+1 IQ, +1 HT

-1 DX, -1 ST

1 level of Acute Hearing

Colorblind

High Pain Threshold

1 level of Magic Resistance

2 levels of Toughness

Determine height and weight normally.

All Sidhai have feathery black hair and solid green eyes (no white, no pupil). Their skins range in color from a cream-white to a brownish tan, and the texture can be anywhere from baby-smooth to a bark-like roughness. Instead of teeth, they have hard bony ridges inside their mouths. They have four fingers on their hands, and their feet are three-toed in a "Y" form: two toes in front of the ankle, one behind. They have no fingernails or toenails, and do not possess a navel.

The Sidhai are an intelligent race in competition with humans for living space on the Jadiwan continent of NARTH. A much older and longer-lived (they age as standard GURPS elves) race than Men, the Sidhai are the original inhabitants of the Jadiwan continent. The more fecund and ferocious humans have slowly forced the Sidhai into three relatively small homelands, helped by two things: their overall numbers, and their ability to use magic. In defense, the Sidhai, who do not produce spellcasters, turned to technology for defense. It is only the fact that they are one TL beyond the humans that keeps them from being wiped completely off the map.

Unknown to most humans is the fact that the Sidhai are a species of mobile sentient plant life that has a reasonably bipedal, humanoid form. The Sidhai like to keep this fact very quiet. Unfortunately, humans who do not know anything about Sidhai physiology are at a -5 on First Aid and a -10 on Physician skills when trying to treat them, and of course their innate resistance poses some problems for magical healing. As a further, disquieting detail, Sidhai blood is a thin, brown sap-like liquid, likely to freak those not familiar with it.

Sidhai are by nature somewhat phlegmatic. No Sidhai is Impulsive or can go Berserk; defense-only Pacifism is not an uncommon disadvantage. Common Sense, Acute Hearing (above the racial norm), even greater Magical Resistance, and Animal/Plant Empathies (any level) are common advantages. Another common advantage is

additional Toughness. If the GM allows, Sidhai may buy a second point of Toughness for 10 points, and a third for 15, but no more. Sidhai with DR 3 are obvious to the casual viewer, for their skin displays the bark-like consistency mentioned above. A Sidhai can have no more than one level of Acute Sight. Sidhai cannot be Psionic, and thus cannot have Danger Sense as an advantage.

Bad sight (nearsightedness), Bad Reputation or Social Stigma (among humans only), Xenophobia (towards humans only), and a species chauvinism that counts as Fanaticism are likely disadvantages.

In a fantasy setting such as my Narth, Sidhai can have powerful priestly/clerical types, capable of directly invoking the power of their Goddess, Linde (pronounced LINN-day). Priestly power is, for them, something other than manipulation of mana, so they will not fit into worlds where "Clerical Aptitude" and Magic Resistance cannot be possessed by the same character.

The language of the Sidhai, Sidhaisin, is a M/VH skill.

*PAPYRUS* note: AD&D players can use the *Vegepygmy*, *Monster Manual II*, page 124.



## REVIEW *DragonQuest*

*DragonQuest* is a FRPG that was originally released by SPI and later revised in a second edition.

After TSR bought SPI, they released a third edition which is still available.

The character generation system consists of rolling a random number which is then allocated to attributes like agility, magical aptitude and physical strength. The size of the original random number determines the maximum amount that can be allocated to a single attribute, this prevents players with large initial rolls from creating super strong beings and forces them to create more rounded characters.

Character races include: human, dwarf, elf, halfling, giant, shape changer (lycanthrope) and orc. Racial adjustments to character abilities and experience point multipliers help to balance the game. One exciting feature of the game is that all of the creatures in the monster section are listed with ranges of abilities just like the characters. It would take little, if any, effort to create gnome, minotaur, hobgoblin, neanderthal, centaur or any other race of character.

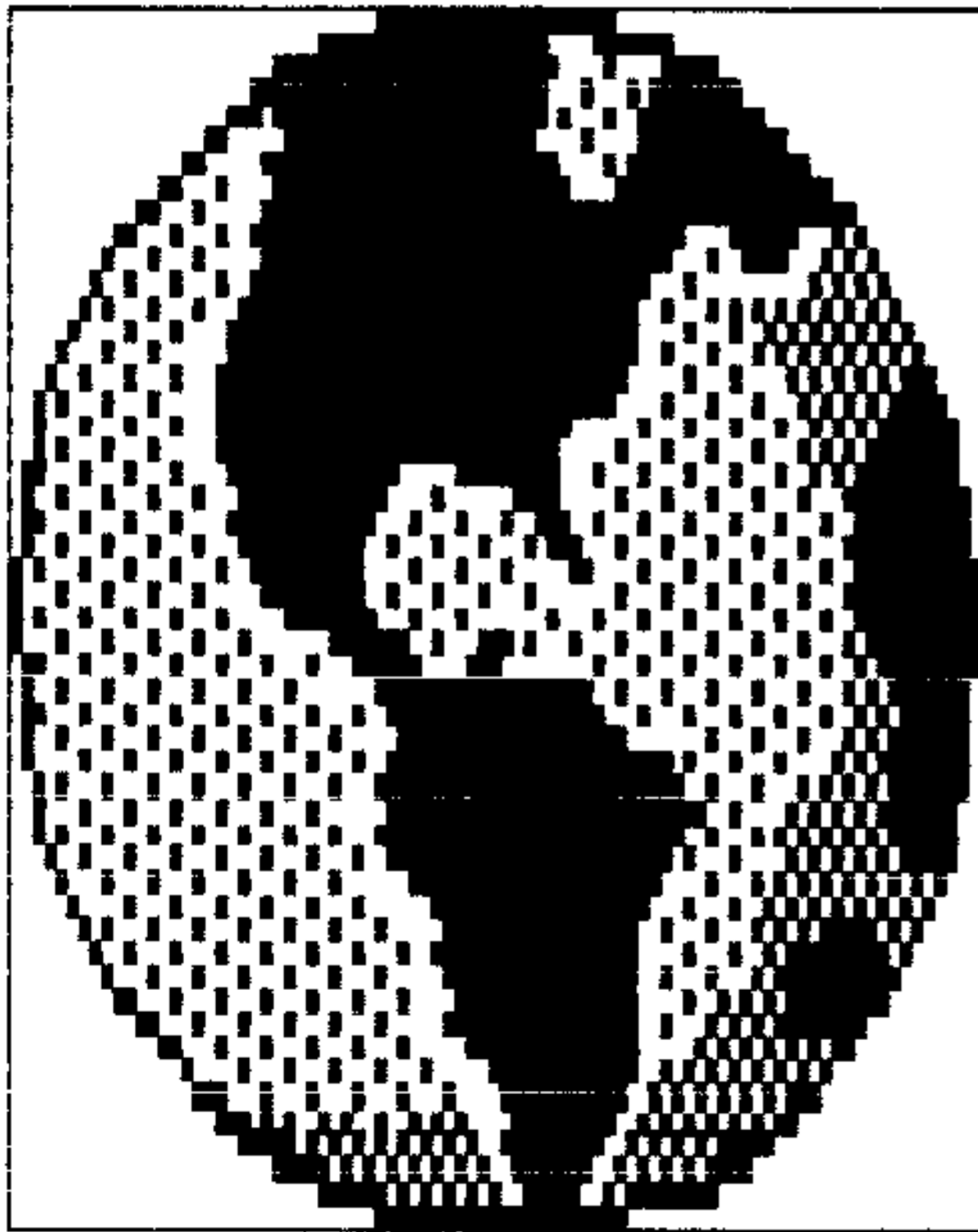
There are no character classes, characters use their experience to by levels of proficiency in skills, weapons or magic. Skills include: alchemy, beast mastery, ranger, thief, languages, troubadour, navigation as well as others. There are several colleges of magic with numerous spells and counter-spells and a fair list of weapons categorized by usage.

Individual combat receives a clear, well illustrated explanation which would be helpful to any player of any RPG. Ranges, field of fire, flank attacks, etc are explained and pictures of miniatures on a hex grid provide visual aid. A 25mm hex grid is provided to be copied and used as a tactical display, a smaller scale grid for mapping is also provided for mapping.

The rule book comes complete with character creation, advancement, combat, magic and encounter rules. An excellent adventure takes up the last few pages along with blank player character and adventure record sheets for photocopying.

The flaws in DragonQuest are small but devastating. First, there is little support material. The now defunct Judges Guild had published a few adventures and TSR has one that was compatible with AD&D as well (DQ1, The Shattered Stone). There is no campaign material and no growth in the system since TSR's 3rd edition aside from some DRAGON Magazine articles. Secondly, the list of creatures may be considered uninteresting by some but monster creation/conversion is easy and fun enough to solve this problem.

All in all DragonQuest is an excellent game system with easy to learn rules. A group of players with great imagination and creativity could easily campaign for years and even use the rules to play other genre (eg. scifi, superhero, horror) but there is little outside assistance nor support.



### **The World of Uttgart**

Uttgart is one of several campaign worlds published by Ragnarok Enterprises in support of AD&D and their own Ysgarth FRPG. This background information was provided by Ragnarok's Necropolis of Dreams free computer BBS which can be reached at (512)472-6905.

### **GENERAL BACKGROUND**

Uttgart is a scarred and embattled world. It is ruled by the Ring Lord Gilrod, though there are pockets of resistance in hiding about the world. His hold is strongest in the area to the west of the Mountains of Ikurna, where his fortress, Castle Melanir is located. In this region are the major cities of Lansnor, New Ulkhar, Ulvar, Zardash and Melitor. The region to the east of the mountains is returning to a wilderness state in most areas and harbors many rebel factions.

Historically, Uttgart has been a battleground between major religious and political factions. A series of wars called the 'Karma Wars' culminated after some 30 years in a showdown between followers of the Aesir, known as the 'Pool', and the Egyptian Ennead, known in Uttgart as the 'Flame'. The upshot of the war was that Gilrod, leader of the Flame became ruler of the remains of the world, and supporters of enemy and allied factions were forced to either flee the world or go underground, where they form a rebel resistance movement.

The most important city on Uttgart at the start of the war was Ulkhar, which was destroyed in the last phase of the war. Until then it was a huge metropolis with a population of more than one-million souls. The second great city was Zushran, capital of an island empire which controlled the trade routes of the Great Sea of Chunors and all points west, while Ulkhar controlled all of the inland oceans east of the Straits of Skur, with the exception of the Sea of Whelern, which was in the control of the Kingdom of Dyvan. One of the culminating moments of the Karma Wars was the battle between Ulkhar and Dyvan over control of overland trade routes to the north. At the peak of this war the Zushrani Empire jumped in with a massive naval invasion in an attempt to seize both the straits of Skur and Zekar, and thereby have sole domination of the Seas of Arfayne and Whelern, completing its maritime hegemony. Ulkharan politics were in the midst of a



republican election disarray and the Strait of Skur was seized with ease, but the fleet was turned back by Dyvan magic (Dyvan was known for its devious use of alien magical forces). This prompted a revolt in Zushran in which Emperor Varekos was overthrown by his sons in an effort to placate their enemies. Varekos counterfeited his own death and in league with ancient powers struck back against his sons and people to establish a reign of terror and social collapse, ruling from a throne of the blood of sacrifices to unholy and supernatural allies. In the midst of this furor, Ulkharan allies from the barbaric north swept down into Northern Dyvan, in a crushing victory. In his last moments, Pryderi, Regent of Dyvan called down the ultimate destruction on Ulkhar, summoning an asteroid from the sky to obliterate the coastal city. The reaction was unprecedented. The physical results of the attack caused massive earthquakes and tidal waves, and the backlash for Dyvan was massive retribution from a tribunal of angered gods. Out of all of this mess came economic collapse, the fall of almost all the major kingdoms of the world, and the perfect gap for the ruthless Gilrod to fill with his new order.

One direct result was that Ulkhar was totally destroyed, while the tidal wave which spread south into the Great Sea of Chunors washed over Zushran as if it were but a rock in the stream. The empire was no more, save in the hearts of refugees who had been in other ports on business at the time. Survivors in Ulkhar built the city of New Ulkhar on the shores of what was now the bay of Ulkhar, once the greatest city in the world. The survivors in Zushran tried to rebuild their culture in the islands which were left around their great city, parts of which remained buried just beneath the surface of the water. What became of Varekos was never learned, but tales of his last days left horrible legends of his mad schemes for power and immortality.

Three generations (almost 90 years) have passed since the

cataclysm which destroyed the Zushrani Empire, and tales abound of its lost riches. Naval sciences especially navigation have declined in those years without the influence of Zushrani navigators, and few venture far into the Great Sea of Chunors. Some brave adventurers have sought the island of Zushroen which was the seat of the empire, of the few who actually returned most told of barren rocks and ruins, with no sign of the gold-paved streets and treasure troves of legend. Still, it is a dream of many adventurers to find the lost treasures of Zushran.

#### Next Issue?

- A new GURPS monster, a big one
- Uttgart's character races and background
- A fanletter from Bard Games, makers of Talislants
- Inter-game system character conversions
- Lands of Adventure FRPG review and use with AD&D
- Bargain buys, in and out of genre
- Our own AKA file, new names for old monsters
- AD&D and V&V, similarities / differences / combinations

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## TRADE LIST

Here's a good excuse to write back. As you may have guessed I enjoy researching and experimenting with game rules and backgrounds. As a result I've got a lot of stuff I don't use anymore, the below list contains some of it. I'd like to trade for "new" stuff to feed my curiosity. Check out the below list, write back with any offers or to ask about specific stuff you've been looking for that I haven't listed.

Specifically I'm looking for a GURPS Basic Set (3rd edition), even if slightly used, with or without supplements. I am also interested in attaining any Talislanta, City State of the Invincible Overlord, MERP or GURPS material. All offers will be considered, the above and below lists are by no means all inclusive.

- \_\_\_\_\_ AD&D 1on1 game book, "Challenge of Druid's Grove"
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fighting Fantasy Gamebook, "SWORD OF THE SAMURAI", by Steve Jackson and Ian Livingston
- \_\_\_\_\_ A Crossroads Adventure Gamebook in the world of Anne McCaffrey's Pern, "DRAGONFIRE", by Jody Lynn Nye
- \_\_\_\_\_ A Crossroads Adventure Gamebook in the world of Robert Silverberg's Majipoor, "REVOLT ON MAJIPOOR", by Matt Costello
- \_\_\_\_\_ DC Heroes adventure module, "When a Stranger Calls"
- \_\_\_\_\_ PAPYRUS club RPG newsletters, issues 1 and 2
- \_\_\_\_\_ GAMMA World adventure module, "Legion of Gold GW1" and Official Rules Supplement, plus 2 photocopied post-holocaust adventures
- \_\_\_\_\_ TSR HeartQuest adventure gamebooks #1-4
- \_\_\_\_\_ SPI, DragonQuest (2nd edition) FRPG package, includes:
  - all in one rule book with adventure, "The Camp of Alla-Akabar"
  - DragonQuest/AD&D adventure module DQ1, "The Shattered Statue"
  - Copies of Official and Unofficial rules supplements
  - Home made GM's portfolio of official charts and tables
  - Character and Adventure record sheets
  - Unofficial/original Bestiary supplement
- \_\_\_\_\_ HEROES, a role playing game, from England, set in the dark ages, by Dave Millward
  - dark ages role playing, no monsters, no magic, no nonsense
  - based on historic, Europe-like, Ouesterlands
  - includes rule book and map of the Ouesterlands with cultural background
  - would make a good campaign setting for any FRPG with a little work and some imagination (substitute humanoid races for human nationalities, add monsters and magic)
- \_\_\_\_\_ LABYRINTH (SOLO3), a Tunnels & Trolls solo adventure
  - uses gamebook format, adaptable to any FRPG system