

INFINIVERSE™

VOLUME 1

C A M P A I G N G A M E

NUMBER 2



CONTENTS

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| Calrifications | 2 |
| Dispatches | 3 |
| New Stuff | 7 |
| Hot Spots | 10 |
| Your Letters | 11 |

Contributors This Issue:
Greg Farshtey, Greg Gorden.



Publisher:
Daniel Scott Palter
Associate Publisher:
Steven Palter
Creative Staff:
Fred Jandt, Nikola Vrtis
Sales Director:
Sue Hartung
Treasurer:
Karen Bayly
Accountants:
Mary Galant, Wendy Lord
Secretarial Assistant:
Paula Lasko

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Welcome to *Infiniverse*! Or should we say, welcome back to *Infiniverse*. We're glad you're here. The databases are up and running, the imaginations are firing up, and the metaphors are mixing. We are pretty darned excited to be working with you on this interactive campaign game.

We are writing this issue of *Infiniverse* shortly after returning from the Origins convention in Atlanta. There we had sold-out tournaments, filled demo sessions, and well-attended seminars. There was plenty of die-rolling, card-flipping and roleplaying to be found. At the booth we also talked ourselves hoarse and listened ourselves silly. From the comments (and the letters others have written in), there are a number of projects which *Torg* players are interested in seeing which we have not yet put on our schedule. We would like you to let us know which, if any, of the following strongly appeal to you.

- **Core Earth Sourcebook.** Contains political information on Core Earth. It would also feature the sorts of animals found on Earth which might be found in other realms. Some additional equipment, locations, organizations and characters. 128 pages.

- **Character Handbook.** A more detailed character generation system, concentrating less on point-spending

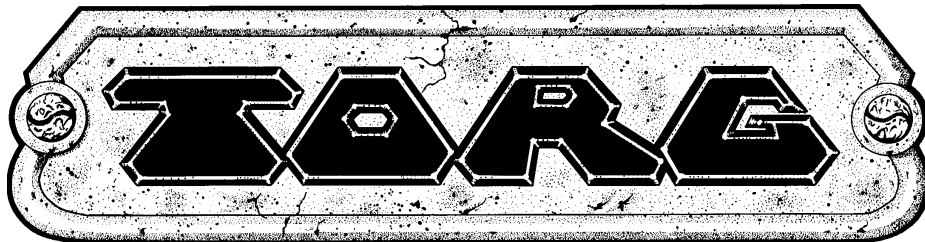
mechanics, and more on possible character backgrounds, connections, and personal quirks. 64 pages (128 pages?)

- **Map of the Near Now.** A 34" by 23" full-color map of Earth of the Near Now, showing invasion sites, bridges, stelae, cities, and locations important to the Possibility Wars.

Equally important to us is you letting us know what you do not want to see happen with *Torg*, the Possibility Wars and the *Infiniverse*. Obviously, with the number of people who play *Torg* we cannot accede to every request. But we read every letter we get, and we assimilate as many different points of view into a product as we can while building the release around a coherent set of ideas.

Many Thanks: We would like to thank Barbara Schlichting for her heroic efforts in programming the beast which forms the heart of *Infiniverse*. Game companies often have need for the kindness of volunteers such as playtesters. Barb's programming efforts were beyond the call of duty.

We would also like to thank Jacques Behar, Anne Vetillard and the rest of the gang at Jeux Descartes. They did a wonderful rush job commenting upon a draft of the Cyberpapacy sourcebook. Their insight (not to mention their maps) will make the book a much niftier product.





Clarifications and Corrections

Torg: Roleplaying the Possibility Wars covers a vast number of potential game situations in a (comparatively) compact number of pages. Below are important clarifications and corrections to the rules. We appreciate the players who brought them to our attention.

Rulebook

Ord Rolls: Ords roll again only on a roll of 10, a rule found under "Reality Skill" on page 19.

Attributes and Skills: The climbing example on page 52 should use *Strength* rather than *Dexterity*.

We implied that increasing an attribute increases a skill value; it does.

Link Difficulty Chart: The column and row titles were reversed. "Character is from" should be on the left, while "Character is in" should be on the right. The edeinis link example on page 100 is correct. See the revised chart below.

Principle of Definition: Page 112. A spell cast upon a target has a "strength" equal to the magic skill of its caster. When another magician casts a spell upon the target, the old spell generates a total to resist the new spell. The defensive total is generated as if the magician were recasting the spell, but he does not have to be present; his magic ability is assumed to be within the spell. It is the spell rather than the mage who cast it who

suffers any ill effects (such as disconnection). If the mage is possibility rated, then the spell gains a roll-again on a 20. If the target is a possibility rated character, she may use a Possibility to roll-again to increase the defensive spell total.

The spell with the higher total takes effect, and the other spell is immediately dissipated.

Chapter 12 Equipment: Cuir Bouilli on torso and limbs reduces the character's *Dexterity* by one, in the same manner as a bullet proof vest. Silk lining is effective with all armor of Tech 19 or less.

The M-1 Garand has a Tech level of 21. The 75 mm tank gun has a price value of 28. A grenade has a damage value of 19.

Hot air balloons vary in *Toughness* from 9 to 15, while the gondolas provide soft cover. Tech 19 Zeppelins have *Toughness* from 10 to 18, Tech 20 Zeppelins have *Toughness* from 10 to 21. Their gondolas provide medium cover.

Gliders provide soft cover (hang-gliders provide no cover), and have *Toughness* from 8 (hang-gliders) to 19 (WWII troop landing gliders).

War boomerang: Tech 7, damage value is STR+4, range 3-5/ 40/ 100.

World Book

Cyberpapacy: Three pieces of equipment were inadvertently left off

the table on page 42:

Low light eye
Surgery Difficulty: 8
Surgery Effect: wound
Cyber Rating: +2
Cost (Value): 5,000 (15)

Rove eye
Surgery Difficulty: 8
Surgery Effect: wound
Cyber Rating: +2
Cost (Value): 10,000 (16)

Le Dos skin
Surgery Difficulty: 13
Surgery Effect: heavy
Cyber Rating: +2
Cost (Value): 15,000 (17)

Nile: The standard mummy has an *intimidation* of 16.

Character Templates: The Gadget Hero has a *Spirit* of 10, not 11. The Tough Hero has 10 skill points; her extra three attribute points come from the *super attribute* power, which has an adventure cost of three. Two of the points went to TOU, the other to STR.

The Contract Ninja is supposed to have 69 points, due to his martial arts skill. The reasons and drawbacks will be explained in the *Nippon Tech* sourcebook.

Not all equipment (armor in particular) is given a tech level; fill them in from the equipment lists.

LINK DIFFICULTY CHART

| Character is from | Character is in | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------|-------------|--------|---------|-------------|
| | Core Earth | Living Land | Aysle | Nippon Tech | Cyber. | Orrorsh | Nile Empire |
| Core Earth | 0 | 18 | 11 | 8 | 6 | 8 | 6 |
| Living Land | 16 | 0 | 10 | 16 | 12 | 9 | 9 |
| Aysle | 14 | 20 | 0 | 17 | 11 | 6 | 8 |
| Nippon Tech | 5 | 19 | 11 | 0 | 7 | 8 | 7 |
| Cyberpapacy | 9 | 21 | 12 | 12 | 0 | 9 | 8 |
| Orrorsh | 11 | 17 | 8 | 15 | 8 | 0 | 6 |
| Nile Empire | 11 | 16 | 10 | 12 | 8 | 5 | 0 |



Dispatches and Rumors

Dispatches

1

A bomb has exploded in the Cairo Opera House, killing syndicate leader Enrico Grask and eight of his lieutenants, and wounding Grask's brother Vito and four other aides.

Cairo was plunged into chaos by this incident. Vito Grask took up the gauntlet, systematically hitting each of Cairo's crime bosses. The city became a battleground, with each syndicate leader retaliating in his own bloody fashion. No one was safe, and a number of innocent bystanders were killed in the fighting.

In the midst of this carnage, a new hero appeared. Calling himself "Deathhawk," and displaying remarkable physical prowess along with an arsenal of high-tech weapons, this mysterious figure began hunting down and eliminating crime lords — and any innocents foolish enough to get in the way.

The fear inspired by his ruthless methods put an end to the gang war. Now the path of the Storm Knights has crossed with that of Deathhawk, as both attempt to invade a gangland parley. Deathhawk offers them a choice: side with him, or be considered an enemy.

In truth, "Deathhawk" is Dr. Mobius in disguise. He planted the bomb in the opera house and is using this disguise as part of an insidious plan.

Deathhawk (Dr. Mobius): DEX 11, STR 16, TOU 17, PER 9 (16), MIN 9 (23), CHA 9 (24), SPI 8 (21).

Skills: reality 11, fire combat 13, maneuver 12, melee weapons 13,

stealth 18, unarmed combat 12, air vehicles 10, evidence analysis 11, Egyptian religion 11, hieroglyphics 10, language 11, scholar 10, trick 10, hypnotism 11, meditation 10, medicine 11, science 11, test 11 (24), weird science 12, willpower 24, charm 10, persuasion 11, taunt 10 (24), intimidation 10 (21).

Note: As part of his "Deathhawk" disguise, Dr. Mobius wears an exoskeleton to increase his physical attributes. But the mental strain it produces lowers his mental and spiritual attributes when used actively; defensively they remain the same, as noted in the parentheses. Mobius accepts the penalty, because it lessens the possibility that an opponent would guess he is the High Lord.

Possibilities: 40

Equipment: Four smoke grenades (TECH 22/damage value 10/range 0-5,10,19), magnesium flare (TECH 24/damage value 11/range 0-3,8,15), twin battle staves (TECH 10/damage value STR+4), gauntlet blasters (TECH 24/damage value 25/range 3-15, 40, 60.)

Inclination: Evil

Goals (immediate): To establish the cover identity of "Deathhawk" as a means to eventually eliminate his enemies.

Critical Event: Confronting Deathhawk and defeating him in public. If the battle goes against him, Deathhawk will flee, using an extremely powerful smoke grenade (and his stealth skill) to escape; only in this case can the Storm Knights end with an adventure result of 6 or better. If the Knights are able to battle Deathhawk to a stalemate, they will be able to make connections on the street for information. If the Knights are defeated, they gain little or no information; the best they can hope for in an adventure result of 2.

2

Singapore is under siege. Monsters rule the night, and the police have virtually ceded the poorer sections of the city to the creatures. No sane man or woman ventures out except in dire emergencies. But in this crowded city, there are many who must walk the streets after dark to survive.

Something is killing them. Three street people a week for the last three weeks, strangled and horribly mutilated by a killer dubbed "The Ripper."

The Storm Knights are informed of the murders by a street urchin. He tells them that the Ripper approaches young men and women on the street, takes them into an alley or back to their hovels, and then murders them. The killer then covers the walls, floor and ceiling of the apartments with pentagrams and arcane symbols scrawled in his victim's blood. And in an even more bizarre twist, microchips are embedded in the pentagrams.

"The Ripper" is actually two men. A Core Earth man, an ally of Thratchen, serves as the bait, luring the unsuspecting. He then strangles the victims, but it is the second man, Kibos, a wizard in Thratchen's employ, who performs the mutilations. The killings are part of a complex ritual designed to "gate" in another Techno-demon from Thratchen's native realm. The magician has two more murders to go — if the Knights don't stop him by then, everyone will be in peril.

Kibos: DEX 7, STR 8, TOU 8, PER 13, MIN 13, CHA 7, SPI 10.

Skills: reality 11, maneuver 8, alteration magic 15, scholar (occult lore) 15, trick 14, conjuration magic 16, test 14, taunt 8, intimidation 11.

Possibilities: 15

Equipment: Dagger (TECH 7/damage value STR+3/11).

Spells: Kibos' primary spell of defense is "mage dark" (see *Rulebook*, page 119). This would be in effect when the Storm Knights approach the site of the final murder. Offensively, he relies on the lightning spell (*Rulebook*, page 119).

Goals: To successfully "gate" in a Techno-demon and please Thratchen, thus paving the way to more power and influence in Orrorsh.

Critical Event: The Storm Knights must race against time to save the final victim. They confront the mage in a climactic battle (his accomplice is not on the scene). If they are able to save the victim's life (thus stopping the ritual, they can have an adventure result of 6 or above. If they are unable to save the girl, but do stop the ritual, they have an adventure result of at least 3. If they are unable to prevent the ritual's completion, the best they can hope for is an adventure result of 2.

3

Kanawa Corp. learns that the inhabitants of a large Shinto temple just outside of Hong Kong are members of the Sons of the Wind. A Kanawan agent approaches the firm which owns the land adjacent to the temple, the Do-Lung Real Estate Conglomerate, and, using falsified documents, convinces them that the temple residents do not have legal claim to their land.

Spurred by the information, Do-Lung purchases the land the temple rests on from a Kanawa front company. They then inform the Sons of the Wind that they have 30 days to vacate the premises.

The martial arts masters refuse to leave. The Storm Knights are made aware of the situation by an old ally, Kenji Yosujiro, who fears that the confrontation will lead to bloodshed. Aided by Yosujiro, the Storm Knights attempt to intercede in the conflict.

The Knights' investigation turns up evidence that the documents which support Do-Lung's claim are worthless. Meanwhile, the Chinese police, under the command of Captain Liu Guang, prepare to strike.

Kenji Yosujiro: DEX 12, STR 8, TOU 9, PER 9, MIN 9, CHA 9, SPI 10.

Skills: reality 11, maneuver 13, martial arts 15, missile weapons 13, stealth 13, unarmed combat 13, evidence analysis 10, trick 10, test 10, taunt 10, intimidation 11.

Possibilities: 10

Equipment: Throwing stars (TECH 9/damage value STR+3/range 3-5, 10, 15).

Goals: To prevent the destruction of his brother Sons of the Wind.

Liu Guang: DEX 9, STR 9, TOU 9, PER 10, MIN 10, CHA 11, SPI 8.

Skills: reality 9, fire combat 12, maneuver 10, evidence analysis 12, find 11, trick 11, test 11, persuasion 12, taunt 12 intimidation 10.

Possibilities: 10

Equipment: .357 Desert Eagle (TECH 22/damage value 16/ammo 6/ range 3-10, 25, 50).

Goals: To obey orders and thus rise to power in the police department.

Critical Event: The Storm Knights must prove to the police that Do-Lung's claim is a false one and defuse the situation before it gets out of control. If the Storm Knights are able to convince the authorities of the truth before any blood has been shed, they can obtain an adventure result of 6 or better. If they are unable to prevent the police from launching a full-scale assault on the temple, they have failed the adventure.

4

The forces still loyal to Uthorion in Aysle have won several impressive victories in recent weeks. Their forces strike in the dead of night, led by an advance guard that fights with a berserker fury. Pella Ardinay has asked the Storm Knights to learn the identity of these new, highly effective troops and destroy them.

The answer is not long in coming, and it is a horrifying one: an Ayslish wizard, Germaigne, has designed a spell which allows him to reanimate dead Storm Knights and use them as "shock troops" in battle. Like animated skeletons, these undead Stormers feel no pain and must be utterly destroyed to be stopped. But they have the advantage of being possibility-rated, something Aysle's skeleton horde is not.

The Storm Knights realize that the only way to stop the carnage is to defeat Germaigne and destroy any records of the ritual. They learn from a centaur that the sorcerer lives in a great fortress on the Scottish coast known as Ebonhill. It is there that the Knights must go to combat this evil.

But the centaur is an agent of the wizard, his job to lure the Storm Knights into a trap and give Germaigne more dead heroes to reanimate. Ebonhill is protected by ghouls, trolls, and a squad of undead Storm Knights.

Germaigne: DEX 8, STR 8, TOU 8, PER 12, MIN 12, CHA 8, SPI 10.

Skills: reality 11, dodge 9, maneuver 9, alteration magic 14, trick 13, appotation magic 14, conjuration magic 15, test 13, taunt 9, intimidation 12.

Possibilities: 13

Spells: Germaigne relies on the altered fireball spell (*Rulebook*, page 116) for offense, and normally casts a spell of weakness (*Rulebook*, page 122) on his chamber which affects any intruder who enters. The statistics for his reanimation spell are as follows:

Reanimation:

Axiom Level: 9

Skill: *appotation/inanimate forces*, 18

Backlash: 19

Difficulty: 13

Effect Value: 14

Bonus number to: effect

Range: 8 (40 meters)

Duration: 38 (one year)

Cast time: 18 (one hour)

Manipulation: control

Goals: To become the most powerful sorcerer in Aysle, and succeed where Uthorion failed by conquering the realm.

Ghouls, Trolls: (*Worldbook*, page 31.)

Undead Storm Knight: DEX 9, STR 15, TOU 15, PER 2, MIN 2, CHA 3, SPI 11.

Skills: reality 12, dodge 10, maneuver 10, unarmed combat 10, lifting 18, trick (25), test (25), taunt (25), intimidation 13.

Possibilities: 10

Note: The strength of the Storm Knights is greatly increased by the reanimation ritual, but they are left mindless and totally under the control of the sorcerer who brought them back from the dead. It is impossible to taunt, charm, or persuade an undead Storm Knight. They do not feel pain, and must be completely destroyed to be halted.

Critical Event: The Storm Knights must defeat Germaigne and destroy the parchment on which the ritual of reanimation is written (this will immediately release any undead Storm Knights from the effects of the ritual.) If they can accomplish this, they get win with at least an adventure result of 5. If they can defeat Germaigne and the undead Knights, but not before Germaigne is able to magically transport the parchment away, they have an adventure result of 4.

Rumors

1

There are reports that a number of people in the city of Reims have been seized by a severe form of cyberpsychosis, causing widespread rioting and destruction. The French Underground is convinced this is the work of an Alsatian cyberneticist, Dr. Auguste Watteau, and a Core Earth psychiatrist, Dr. Martha Teller.

The experiment is frighteningly simple: Watteau has altered the wiring in a vast amount of cyberware to attempt to determine exactly what

causes the onset of cyberpsychosis, while Teller studies the effects of the mental illness. Their purpose is to eventually construct a weapon which will induce cyberpsychosis in anyone with even a single item of cyberware added to their body.

Watteau and Teller are reportedly in hiding somewhere in Reims, under the protection of four Cyberpriests.

This weapon, if constructed, could prove a serious threat to the Underground and any Storm Knights with cybernetic attachments.

Dr. Auguste Watteau: DEX 8, STR 8, TOU 8, PER 12, MIN 13, CHA 7, SPI 10.

Skills: reality 11, dodge 9, maneuver 9, evidence analysis 13 (+2 chip for 15), trick 13, science (cybernetics) 15 (+2 chip for value 17), test 14, persuasion 9, taunt 9, intimidation 11.

Possibilities: 11

Equipment: chipholder 3

Cyber Value: 2

Goals: To remain in the Cyberpopé's favor by making this research project a success.

Dr. Martha Teller: DEX 7, STR 7, TOU 7, PER 12, MIN 12, CHA 12, SPI 9.

Skills: reality 10, maneuver 8, evidence analysis 14, scholar (psychiatry) 15, trick 13, test 13, charm 14, persuasion 14, taunt 13, intimidation 10.

Possibilities: 10

Goals: To prove that cyberpsychosis is all "in the mind" and has no connection whatever to how much or what type of cyberware is attached.

2

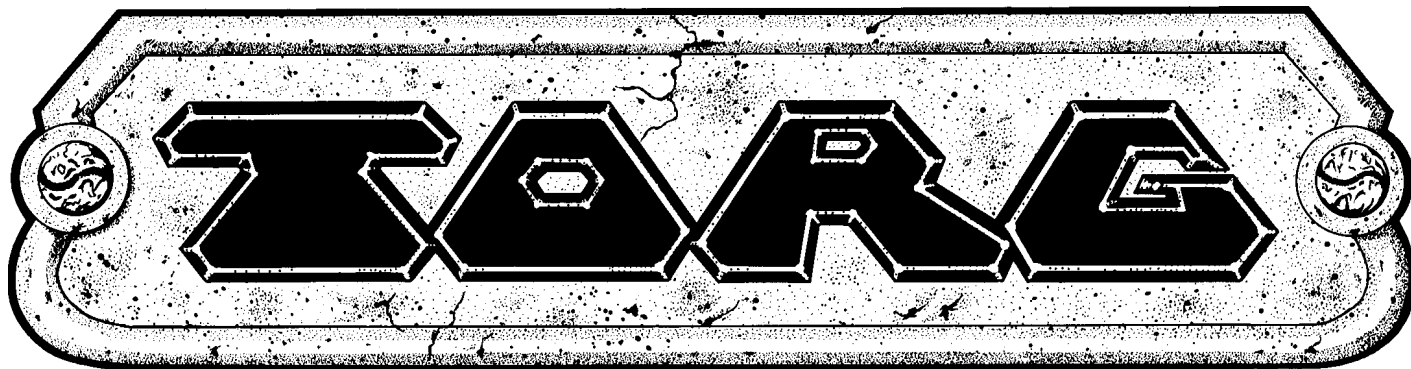
Realm runners emerging from the Eastern Land have claimed to have seen human corpses hanging from trees, brutally butchered and then left at crossroads, apparently as a warning.

These bodies are evidence of a new and brutal tactic in Baruk Kaah's campaign to conquer North America. An elite group of edeinos warriors has been sent into the jungle, charged with the mission of killing storytellers. The relating of tales regarding heroic deeds by Core Earth forces and Storm Knights helps refill realm residents with possibility energy, paving the way for a change in axiom sets (i.e., from the Living Land back to Core Earth.) This could pose a problem for the High Lord, one he plans to stamp out.

So far, five storytellers have been found dead, and Kaah will leave the jungle floor awash in blood if that is what it takes to quiet the bothersome voices forever.

3

Those few travelers who have survived the treacherous reality storms that rage in the English Channel have reported sightings of seal-like creatures darting among the waves. The mariners were unsure whether the beings were fish, mammal or machine (parts of them seemed metallic), but they did agree that the creatures saved ships by acting as guides through the waters.



Osaka, Japan has recently witnessed the birth of a new mega-corporation, Hantu Limited. Its actual ownership is buried under front firms and dummy properties, but it seems to be an independent company, under the influence of neither the Rauru Block or Kanawa Corporation.

Although meeting the major standard of success in the Nippon Realm (financial health), the firm has endeared itself to no one because of its practice of selling technology to other High Lords. The Rauru Block sees this as disloyalty to those who oppose the High Lords, Kanawa sees it as a threat, because the technology might someday be used against Nippon. Both sides have agents investigating the firm.

But there are other questions regarding Hantu — such as, was a shipment of defective cyberware sold to Cyberpope Malraux an isolated incident, or are all Hantu's goods designed to break down at crucial moments? Are they betraying Core Earth out of greed, or is this all a subtle plot to undermine the various realms?

Millennia ago, in the cosm of Orrorsh, a sorcerer seduced by the dark penned a tome called the *Nocturna*. Within its blood-red covers are collected spells, curses, and arcane knowledge, the possession of which would drive most men mad.

For centuries, the book, unable to be destroyed by any known force, passed through some of the most infamous hands in Orrorsh: seers, magicians, demon-worshippers, those who lusted for power and those who lusted for blood, and their names were cursed by its evil.

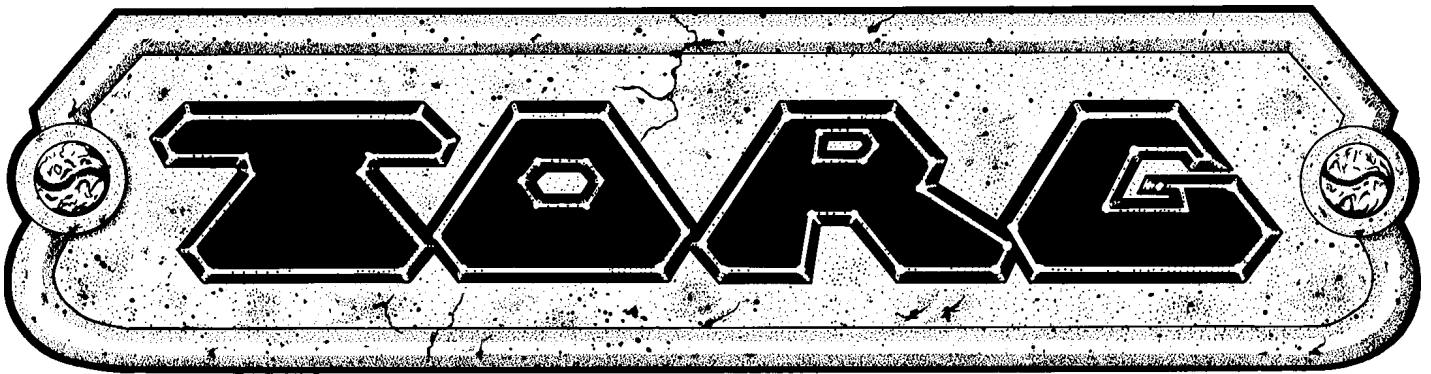
Now, it is said that the *Nocturna* was somehow smuggled across the maelstrom bridge during the invasion of Earth, and is hidden somewhere in Indonesia. Thratchen's forces are searching frantically for the book, focusing their attentions on Jakarta, believing the sorcerous knowledge therein to be the key to power in the realm. A number of Storm Knights have also been searching for it, but none have found it (though there is one whispered story that a Knight did find it, but her mind was twisted by the book and she had to be slain by her

comrades before she destroyed them all).

The *Nocturna* could be a powerful tool in evil hands, which means the Knights have a vested interest in keeping it out of such hands. But the volume contains passages phrased to ensnare the unwary, and any Knight who gains possession of it could be in deadly danger.

Shortly before the invasion of Earth, the cosm of Terra was invaded by its Martians (the same invasion which was a widely-believed hoax on Earth actually happened in Terra). The Terran Martians are spider-like creatures who are able, through the use of a chameleon belt, to assume the shape of humans.

There are reports that some Terran Martians may have slipped across the maelstrom bridge at the tail end of the invasion, and are currently operating within the Nile Empire. They hope to provide minor obstacles to to Mobius' invasion of Earth, thus keeping him too occupied to notice their conquest of Terra.





New Stuff

Heresy in Albi, France

“Kill them all and let God sort them out.”

— *Attributed to Simon De Monfort, as he embarked on the Albigensian Crusade in 1229.*

History: The First Time Around

In 12th century France arose a religious doctrine which posed a direct challenge (and threat) to the hierarchy of Rome. The religion was known to its practitioners as Cathari, derived from the Greek word for pure. However the rest of Europe referred to them as Albigensians, as the Cathari had a stronghold in the French town of Albi.

The Cathari beliefs were strongly dualistic, declaring the world to be sharply divided between good and evil. They believed that the material world was created by an evil god, and that the savior was sent down by the good god to free the divine spark of man from its fleshly prison. The physical world was evil, the world of good was a world filled with spiritual light. While these thoughts were heretical enough for the medieval Church of Rome, the death struggle was initiated over another belief; the Albigensians believed that the Church and its clergy were designed by Satan to trick Christians into thinking that they could be saved through the offices of the church. This sparked a series of crusades which led to the destruction of the final Cathari communities in 1229.

The Cathari established their own hierarchy, ritual and doctrine. Within the hierarchy two basic levels existed, the believers and the perfect. The believers led ascetic lives. They practiced and were taught Cathari doctrine until they were ready to move up the ranks of the perfect. To become perfect, a believer had to undergo the sacrament of consolation, a ritual which removed all sin from a believer. The sacrament of consolation could be taken only once during the believer's lifetime. If one of the perfect sinned after taking the sacrament, upon death he would be reborn into the body of another, to begin the long spiritual journey once again.

History: Scan Ahead, Play Back

The Possibility Wars have led to a new heresy in Albi. Perhaps the heresy is a reaction to the the grip of Jean Malraux and the fears of his intentions. Perhaps the possibility energy of Core Earth has struck back, attempting to reactivate a old pattern of beliefs to reconnect with those living around Albi. The events surrounding the growth of resistance in Albi are filled with exaggeration and wonder, but there is no doubt that they all begin with Victor Berigard.

Victor grew up in the town of Realmont, near Albi. A strong religious upbringing (and a large dose of clumsiness) separated him from most of his peers; he later attended seminary for one year, before deciding the priesthood was not for him. He drifted for two years, until he discovered his aptitude for computers. Working for a small design firm in Albi, Victor immersed himself in the world of computers, a world which Victor thought of as pure. When the axiom wash rolled over France, Victor fell quickly to the

promise of new technology.

Jacking into the GodNet for the first time was a spiritual experience. Here was Victor's ideal world, a world of thought and light, a world shaped by belief, hardware, and the speed of the mind. But Victor could not help but notice some of the evils which came with it; the invasive loss of privacy as the Cyberpriests could monitor every computer in France, the rigid hierarchy being established which would limit citizens access to information and regions of the GodNet. Worst was the miracle of Net Damnation, which routed believers to Purgatory within the GodNet. Victor strongly believed in the good of the GodNet; therefore Jean Malraux and his church must be the source of evil.

Victor began the conspiracy of the Cathari Circuit, a group comprised of old-fashioned hackers and engineers, disgruntled clergy and a few deckers. In secret meetings held almost nightly, theological reasoning and technical evidence merged to form the Cathari doctrine. If God had created the GodNet, then its spiritual power is not derived from its physical housing. The physical housing (the optic cables, CompLexus and telephone exchanges) are merely ways of accessing the GodNet. If true, one should be able to sever the connections with the exchanges controlled by the Cyberpapacy, reroute the signals to maintain telephone and cable connections within the region (but isolated from the rest of France), and still access the GodNet. This conclusion was literally a leap of faith on the part of Victor Berigard, but he managed to convince enough of the others to begin his plan.

On the night of July 14, engineers bolstered by teams of Jaz fighters sabotaged the trunk lines connecting the Albi exchange to the exchanges in Montauban, Toulouse, Carcassonne,

and Rodez, cutting Albi off from the rest of France. Software engineers slipped their version 1.0 chipware into deckers, chipware that theoretically would help a decker navigate ill-defined, possibly even random, cyberspace. Victor Berigard and others prayed for the deckers. Six deckers jacked in.

The two who did not die were not capable of speaking for several days. In that time Cyberpapal technicians had reconnected Albi to Toulouse and Rodez. Church police and the Inquisition went house to house, trying to find the heretics. Some of the software engineers were discovered, and burned as witches. Cardinal Fourier declared order to be restored.

But jackpriests and babel monitors knew better. Athwart the VX lines into Albi were entities which did not come from Avignon. These watchdogs appeared as huge, shadowy behemoths, with loose, folded shapes. As they moved, the folds shifted revealing glimpses of neon-bright bones and dimmer connective tissues. Called "Bright Bones" by the jackpriests, these entities searched for and caught the signals of Malraux's agents as they tried to enter the data vaults at Albi.

Bright Bones: DEX 15, STR 19, TOU 20, PER 16, MIN 24, CHA 15, SPI 20.

Skills: stealth 20 (appear as background noise until discovered), find 28, unarmed combat 19, trick 18, test 25, taunt 18 (20), intimidation 22.

Possibility Potential: Some (12)

Natural Tools: Scramble touch 26 (MIN+2); causes mental damage by jumbling signals sent through cyber interface while boosting them a thousand-fold. Armor +4 (armor value 24).

Bright Bones seek out any jackpriests or other deckers not aligned with the neoCathari. Bright bones will accept the password miracle (see below). They communicate through loud noises accompanied by jumbled messages flashing along their bones. If a decker makes a successful charm action (Bright Bones are hostile to all they meet, except for agents of the Cyberpapacy, who are enemies) a Bright Bones will communicate with her. It is possible for a decker to persuade a Bright Bones to allow her to pass, but not very likely given its *Mind* and disposition.

The Bright Bones were a hot topic in the open vaults and data huts which dot the GodNet. Soon it became apparent that Cyberpapal agents were not welcome in the net in the region of Albi. Albi became a magnet for cyberleggers, freelance technicians and deckers; quite a few were destroyed by the Bright Bones when they tried to enter the net. This slowed the immigration and the enthusiasm.

Vision and New Hope

Victor Berigard and a few remaining heretics were hiding in the basement of a church in the outlying town of Gaillac. Days of meditation, prayer and fasting preceded a miracle; Victor Berigard had a vision in which he received three seeds from an angel. In the vision, he planted the seeds. Two beautiful broad-leafed plants grew from the ground. The third was small, slender, and streaks of sickly yellow shot through its leaves. Prostrating himself before the angel, Victor asked what was wrong with the third plant.

"The third needs the tending of the faithful. Without their hope and willful belief, it shall wither. Yet it is the greatest of the three; the other two are the power within you and your belief in the power of another. Use those two to start your garden of faith. Invite others to join you. Then shall the third seed grow and flourish."

As the vision faded, Victor caught an image of the third plant as a withered husk. The skeletal collection of vines and leaves formed a startlingly familiar pattern to Victor; it was nearly identical to the data structure schematic of an area of the net around Albi.

The vision left Victor Berigard with the *focus* skill and the Core Earth miracles of *bless*, *healing*, *ritual of hope*, and *ritual of purification*, as well as two new miracles, *Cathari consolation* and *password*. Victor healed the two deckers who had jacked into the datanet at Albi. They told him of a changing wasteland, dull deserts, and gray blasted wilderness, landforms which were indistinct and metamorphosing as they travelled through them. Then they each arrived a different gate leading to a radiant garden, a garden of thriving iridescent-fractal plants, with

paths, bridges, and streams. One of them spotted VX wildlife, sparrows, finches and cardinals. There was a soft presence calling them to the center of the garden. But as they entered they each experienced a searing pain, and then a white-blindness. They remember nothing more.

Victor decided to re-enter Albi and explore this heretical portion of the net. He felt the power of God by his side; how could he lose?

Victor Berigard: DEX 7, STR 8, TOU 7, PER 10, MIN 9, CHA 12, SPI 13.

Skills: reality 16, dodge 8, maneuver 8, cyberdeck operation 11, find 11, land vehicles 11, scholar (computer science) 11, trick 12, artist (computer graphics) 12, science 10, test 11, charm 13, persuasion 14, taunt 13, focus 14, faith (neoCathari) 15, intimidation 14.

Possibilities: 18

Equipment: J-jack, Marseilles Hermes (response +3, stealth +1, power 4, storage 3), throat mike wired in by NeuraCal (cyber rating +2), IriMesh-lined frock (+3/ armor value 10), usually carries a bank card with a 250,000 franc limit. Cyber Value 4.

Goals: Free the spirit of France from the earthly grasp of the anti-pope, Jean Malraux.

Cathari Consolation

Spiritual Rating: 13

Community Rating: 6

Difficulty: 10

Range: Touch

Duration: Lifetime

Effects: Removes sin from faithful

Consolation can only be performed on those of neoCathari faith, and it may only be performed once in their lives. A successful miracle removes all the blemishes and effects of sin from the believer. While the primary use of the miracle is to prepare a believer for the afterlife, there are several effects in the here-and-now.

The miracle of Cathari consolation removes all curses placed upon the believer. The miracle increases the believers resistance to *charm*, *persuasion*, and *trick* by an amount equal to the quality the result (i.e. a *good* result grants a believer a +3 against *charm*,

persuasion and trick.) The believer may jack in to the net near Albi unhindered by Bright Bones or other neoCathari entities.

If the believer ever sins (accepts work from the Cyberpapacy or its agents, indulges in pleasures of the flesh or the gain of material things, or ever denies his faith), then miraculous effects cease.

Password

Spiritual Rating: 10

Community Rating: 18

Difficulty: 10

Range: touch

Duration: variable

Effects: safe passage in neoCathari net

The password miracle grants the believer safe passage into neoCathari net around Albi. The duration is a number of hours equal to the result points of the miracle.

Now

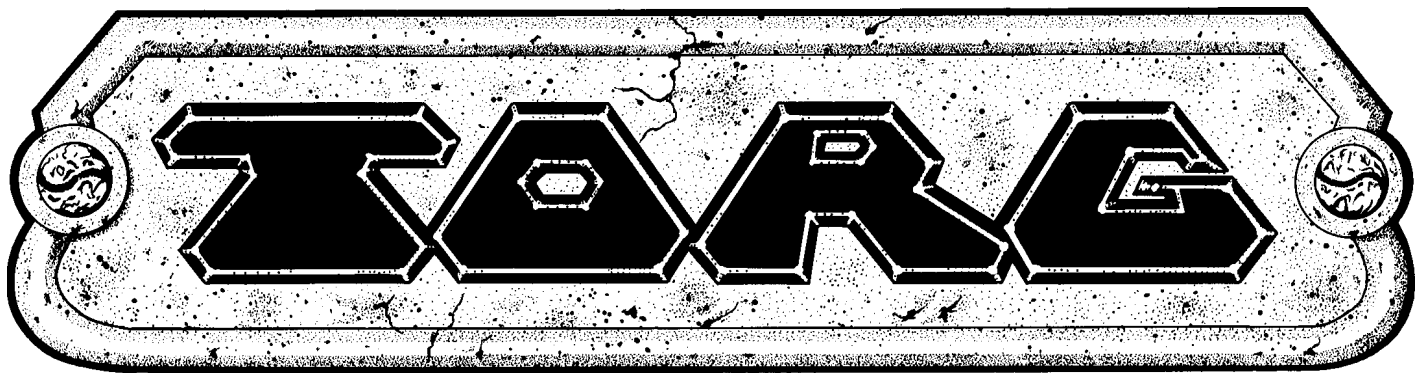
The neoCathari claim (only to the faithful, of course) that they have access to the true spiritual core of the

GodNet. The data structures at Albi have undergone a change, and Cyberpapal agents have been consumed with frequency which has finally caught the attention of Pope Jean Malraux.

The password miracle has proven a bonanza for the heresy. Its sale has given deckers and technicians something they have ached for since the axiom wash first flowed down the maelstrom bridge: a portion of the GodNet in which they have the advantage. Research may be pursued, data exchanged, communications kept confidential from the Cyberpope and his agents.

Cyberware shops are being set up in the vicinity of Albi, and much of the black market in cyber technology is relocating to the area. Unlike the initial rush to Albi just scant weeks ago, this influx is quieter, more orderly. Many techs and the deckers sense that Albi could be the key to a free France. They do not want to alarm the officers of Avignon any more than is absolutely necessary. They know it is only a matter of time before Pope Jean Malraux declares a crusade against the heresy within his borders. Albi is no nearly strong enough to withstand a full military action against them.

To keep the Cyberpope off of them, the black marketers have adopted an extremely cynical strategy. They know the Cyberpapacy monitors all media, eavesdrops on thousands of homes, and has monasteries dedicated to ferreting out useful facts and trends from this social data. They wish to make Albi match Avignon's preconceptions of a recently heretical area which has been cleansed. This means senseless violence as a residue of rebellion, decreasing attacks on the Avignon clergy, an increasing number of "heretics" turned in to the Inquisition (often "heretics" whose only crime is being a stranger to the area), and violence directed against suspected believers of other faiths. The black marketers are eagerly instigating or providing all of the above, while strengthening their hold in Albi. In buying time, they hope to become strong enough to withstand Malraux's eventual military campaign.





Hot Spots

Beppu

Deep beneath the volcanic islands that make up Japan, water is heated by internal fires. These waters come to the surface as hot springs, and the city of Beppu on the island of Honshu is the site of many such pools.

Beppu, a city of roughly 140,000 sits on top of 4,000 geothermal sources, and clouds of steam fill the air and mix with the hazy mist produced by the Nippon axiom wash to make it difficult to find one's way. Still, the spas continue to be popular, and a number of mega-corporate executives have taken advantage of its proximity to Tokyo and built summer palaces in this area, believing the waters will keep them young. The hot baths often serve as informal meeting places for corporation heads, and have been known to be rich sources of information for Kanawan spies. Agents also frequent the volcanic sand banks, where executives and their wives allow themselves to be buried up to their necks in the heated sand.

Bathing in the springs follows a prescribed ritual. The sexes use segregated pools, and the bather rinses off carefully before entering the water. He remains immersed for as long as possible before emerging and drying off with a towel.

Every 24 hours, more than 10 million gallons of scalding water gushes from below the surface, much of it close to boiling. And in some cases, the springs hide dark secrets, often used as dumping grounds for the bodies of Yakuza victims. One body of water in particular has gained this reputation—called "Bloody Pond" in English, its water has been stained red by iron

oxide and the average temperature of the water 212° F.

Many of the spas are now owned by private firms and are reserved for the use of their high-level employees. The Japanese government has also purchased a spring, and uses it to entertain foreign dignitaries during summits (the Japanese version of "a walk in the woods").

Taklimakan Desert

Located in northwestern China, the Taklimakan Desert surely ranks as one of the most barren and desolate sites on Earth. Stretching for 900 miles through the province of Xinjiang, the Taklimakan (whose name is Uygur for "Once you get in, you cannot get out") has been a terror to travelers since the days of Marco Polo.

The winters are bitterly cold, the summers brutally hot, with dust storms blotting out the sky much of the time. For centuries, the Chinese government has been content to leave this land to the Kazaks and Uygurs, the descendants of nomadic herdsman. But in the wake of the Possibility Wars, the desert, close to the borders of the Soviet Union and Afghanistan, has taken on strategic importance.

China originally intended to send troops into the area, but found the climatic conditions too harsh for standard units. The government then mobilized the natives of the region and turned them into a fighting force.

With Orrorsh and the Nile Empire to their south, and the ever-present fear of Soviet invasion at almost a fever pitch, the Taklimakan is expected to be the site of a major battle at some point in the future, either as the first line of defense or as the site of a last stand.

The Kazaks are outfitted with a combination of old and new weapons. Many of the natives prefer clubs, scimitars, or spears to automatic weaponry, which is often rendered useless in a short time by the corrosive effects of the sand. Discipline is tight within the tribes, but the units often bridle when Chinese officials attempt to exert authority over them.

One of the primary responsibilities of these troops is the guarding of the Silk Road, which skirts the Tian Mountains just to the north and would be a probable invasion route for Soviet troops. Temperatures in that area climb as high as 167° F, but the area is also an oasis with grape arbors and underground canals.

Kazak tribesmen would probably be willing to provide food and shelter to a traveling Storm Knight, providing the Knight had something to trade in exchange for it. Soviet Storm Knights might find it more difficult (and more dangerous) to make a deal with the Kazaks, however.

Kazak Warrior: DEX 10, STR 9, TOU 9, PER 10, MIN 10, CHA 9, SPI 9.

Skills: beast riding 11, maneuver 11, melee weapons 12, unarmed combat 12, tracking 11, trick 11, survival 13, test 11, taunt 10.

Equipment: Scimitar (TECH 9, damage value STR+6), short spear (TECH 5, damage +4, max 18, range 3-5, 25, 40) AK-47 (TECH 21, damage value 21, ammo 10, range 3-40, 150, 400.)

Goals: To protect his people from any invaders.





Your Letters

Tkay, here we go with a new round of clever questions and comments followed by confusing answers and quips. Some of the letters were edited for length and / or abbreviations, but otherwise taken verbatim. First up:

The artwork in the rulesbook is quite reasonable, but the drawings in The Living Land are terrible. Please keep future releases at your usual high standards.

The healing rules on page 19 look strange. If I have read this right you might as well generate a bonus number of 0/ +3/ +6 respectively, not bothering with Toughness at all.

On the Bonus Chart the number 10 and 20 appear. It is not possible to generate these numbers through die rolling due to the Roll Again Rule. Have I missed a modifier to the roll?

—Tore Hoyem
Forus, Norway

Okay, some of the art in *The Living Land* sourcebook might have been a little suspect. The artist was on a very tight deadline; we think our product flow is more realistic now. Future products should be up to our “usual high standards.” Your comment does bring up a point about which we would like to know more. What do you want to see for the artwork in a Torg product? A few large illustrations, more numerous small illustrations? Maps? Props such as those found in *The Destiny Map*? Let us know; we do listen.

Yes, Tore, you are correct about the healing rules. They were stated that way because of a call we made; we were trying to shoehorn all of the mechanics into a “generate a total versus a difficulty number.” We were loathe to add even a simple “generate a bonus” mechanic if we could avoid it,

hence the awkward phrasing. Rather silly on our part. The logic of the healing rules is that wounds are relative to your *Toughness*; a wound to an elephant and a wound to a mouse represent the same amount of dysfunction to each animal. Of course, what would wound an elephant would splatter a mouse; but a mouse who is wounded should (in the logic of fiction) have roughly the same difficulty recovering as an elephant who is wounded. So the wound severity determines the healing difficulty, regardless of *Toughness*.

You can have a final die roll of 10 or 20. For example, a character who is stymied and rolls a “10” is not entitled to roll again.

In an invoked reality storm the result gained from the general result table (page 40) is the number of Possibilities permanently lost, right? In the Transformation outcome are the five Possibilities transferred permanently to the winning person? Can Possibilities be spent in reality storms to gain a roll again?

Can you give descriptions of some weapons, like the two types of SC Kyogo weapons (like size, etc.)

In the world book and the Living Land sourcebook, the rules say that when certain things are used (i.e. magic in the Living Land), it creates a contradiction. Does this mean the Everlaw of One eliminates the contradiction without having the character make a contradiction check, and he must now try to relink?

—Robert A. Maxwell,
Athens, GA



Whew! Yes, the number on the Storm column of the General Results Table is the number of Possibilities a stormer or Storm Knight loses when she is the target of a storm. In a transform result, the winner gets to keep five Possibilities (less if the loser had less than five to lose) until she decides to spend them. A character may spend Possibilities to roll again in a reality storm.

Both SC Kyogo weapons fire small .177 caliber ammunition with an extremely dense core to give it some kick. The back half of the round is a reactive metal which reacts with the oxygen in air to give it a rocket assist, plus aid tumbling upon impact. The submachine gun, the SC Kyogo 144 has a collapsible rear stock, and is about two feet (60 cm) long with the stock, and about 15 inches (38 cm) folded down. The SC Kyogo T-11 is about 40 inches long (100 cm), fires a longer version of the same ammunition (the T-11), with a longer barrel for better accuracy.

A contradiction check is always necessary to disconnect. Causing a contradiction is the first step; the second crucial step is being suppressed by the Everlaw of One, which only happens when a character fails a contradiction check.

It's extraordinarily nice to read a product that makes such good use of inclusive language. In my mind this shows a concern for the feelings and sensitivities of female gamers that has heretofore lacking within this industry.

Can I order stuff directly from West End if no hobby store is available? Do you have a listing of when more Torg stuff is due out, and can I get a catalogue?

—Scott Shafer
Delaware, OH.

Thanks for the compliment. Inclusive language strikes us as logical, if initially disconcerting.

You probably have noticed the checklist and order form that comes wrapped around this copy of *Infiniverse*. If you are not near a local retailer or a Waldenbooks who carries our products, use the form. Our crack marketing staff will process it right away. If you ask, they might even send you a catalogue.

1) *The rules are unclear as to how the faith/focus powers work. Could we have some more detailed explanations and/or examples?*

2) *How long should we expect to wait for the other sourcebooks. It is difficult to find clarifications and expansions on rules when we are so often referred to material that isn't on the market yet. HELP!*

3) *Will there be any more equipment lists? For example, how much should we charge from different ammunitions?*

—Jeri Haley & Brian Mudd
Twin Peaks, CA

Faith is used to provide the power for a miracle by tapping into the spiritual belief of the faithful character. *Focus* is used to gather this energy to a single purpose, which is the miracle at hand. Both are necessary for a miracle; the *focus* skill is the more closely associated with the knowledge, rituals and skills of the clergy. Strong belief is sufficient for faith.

The character who benefits from the miracle must provide the *faith* for the miracle. Another character may provide the *focus*; if a character with *focus* is the beneficiary of the miracle's effect, then he uses his own *faith* to generate the miracle.

All of the miracles listed in the "Miracles of Core Earth" section (which are not specifically called rituals) may be invoked as prayers, which means the miracle may be effected in a single round.

Your question was rather general. If you have questions on specific portions of the *faith*, *focus* and miracles rules which we have not covered above, please write *Infiniverse* again.

Herald Messages

The magic axiom of the Aysle realm has released Merlin the magician from his legendary prison. He, in turn, awoke King Arthur Pendragon to banish the entire Aysle realm from the British Isles. The High King is now forming a new Round Table comprised of Storm Knights.

— Richard Ambrose
Stanton, CA

"The world has gone topsy-turvy: New York is overrun by dinosaurs, a bizarre madman is changing reality to conquer the world, and that's not the half of it. My next guest, Dr. Minerva Brand claims to have conclusive proof of vampires and bloodletting Down Under. Next: on Eduardo."

—Jeri Haley & Brian Mudd
Twin Peaks, CA

"Intelligence reports show evidence of a new group in Japan called the Council for Swift and Terrible Retribution. They are allegedly backing survivalist groups in the Living Land, urging them to find nuclear stockpiles in the United States which are currently under the domain of the Living Land. The Council's reasons are murky, at best."

— Martin Wixted
Boston, MA

New Invasion. South America. "Zone Dubbed Dol" has Axioms of 0 for EVERYTHING, but is only 10 miles in area. People have disappeared in this zone focused on Peru. HELP.

—John R. Troy
Oxford, MA

The Still World has been respun in my knights' universe, Dr. Mobius has failed in his attempt to become Torg. However, Dr. Mobius has not been harmed, nor has his empire been seriously damaged. On a brighter note, Baruk Kaah attacked Philly with sabotaged rifles and lost a large gosgop force.

—Daniel Pagoda
Brooklyn, NY

We went to the Cyberpapacy to locate some missing friends of ours. We found them all right, or rather, they found us ...

—Robert B. Baker
Woodbine, IA

All Storm Knights in Detroit — be on the look out for Mike Liverpool, a human Jakatt in Baruk Kaah's service. He is wanted for murder and accused of attempting to destroy Detroit City Hall.

—J. Higginbotham
Lichfield Park, AZ

We will catch it on the rebound.

Believe us, if we could get the sourcebooks out any faster, we would. *Nile Empire* will be out by the time you read this, and *Aysle* is being worked on furiously. *Nippon* and the *Cyberpapacy* are both in house in draft form; they should go out for playtesting in August. In the meantime we hope to give you new material through *Infiniverse*. If you have specific needs, send them to us. We will see what we can do with the space available.

Yes, there will be more equipment lists. There will be lists in each of the supplements (*The Living Land* being the exception) and we hope to slot an equipment book into the 1991 schedule. We will keep you posted.

