

VOLUME 03

CRY HAVOC!

THE CHRONICLES OF THE WORLD OF RACKHAM



NEWS

January-February releases & spring 2005 previews
Sneak preview of the Cynwall elves

RACKHAM WORKSHOP

Painting: Kahinir the Savage / Scenery: Flagstones of Legend
Bases: Miniatures on a Pedestal

STRATEGY

Mission report: A Forced Passage
Where the Lodge of Hod attempts to escape a deadly trap

UNIVERSE

Portrait: Managarm the Traitoress / The Brotherhood of Bronze
Science and inventions of Aarklash / The technology-resistant peoples

GAMING AIDS

Hybrid: new rules for two, three or four players
A Managarm the Traitoress adventure for Confrontation and Rag'Narok

11 EXCLUSIVE CARDS

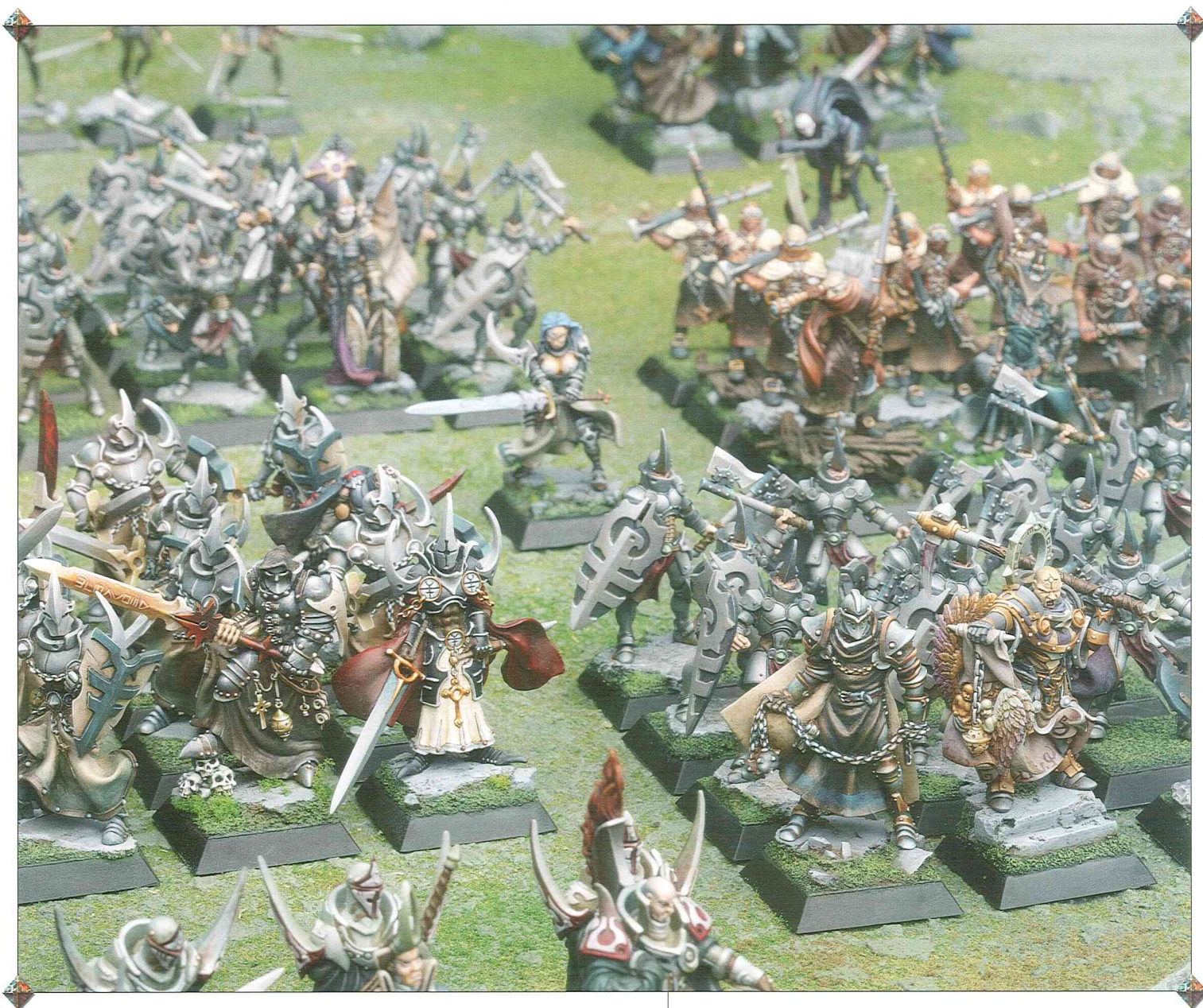
“ Flanked by his Centurus bodyguards, the neuromancer neared the pool. The water was covered by a thick layer of dust and dead rats floating on its surface. The pumping system's pipes were completely eaten by rust. It would take weeks of repairs to bring the gene-library's cooling system back into working order. Unless...

The neuromancer turned to the two colossuses that formed his escort. With a simple thought he ordered one of them to climb down into the pool.

The echo of an explosion was suddenly heard in the metallic corridors.

So the Griffins were still alive.

”



THE TEMPLARS FORM a caste apart in the hierarchy of the Griffon armies. They are the elite of the Akkylannian troops. According to the laws of the empire, they only report to the grand master of the Temple, Prateüs, and to their supreme leader: Emperor Elctave IX.

Each templar Commander has his own seal, the symbol of his authority, his influence and his word. A vnyager who presents himself at a lodge or a commandery while bearing a seal of the Temple is sure to be listened to with attention and respect.



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CAUTION !

Some articles in this issue mention accessories that must be handled extremely
 carefully: the modelling knife with which one can cut oneself, the cyanoacrylate
 glue that bonds very quickly... We recommend that the youngest players and
 collectors only do the following activities under adult supervision and always
 carefully read and follow the instructions supplied with this material.

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CRY HAVOC !

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GAMING AIDS BOOKLET

The Gaming Aids booklet cannot be sold separately from Cry Havoc ! volume 3.

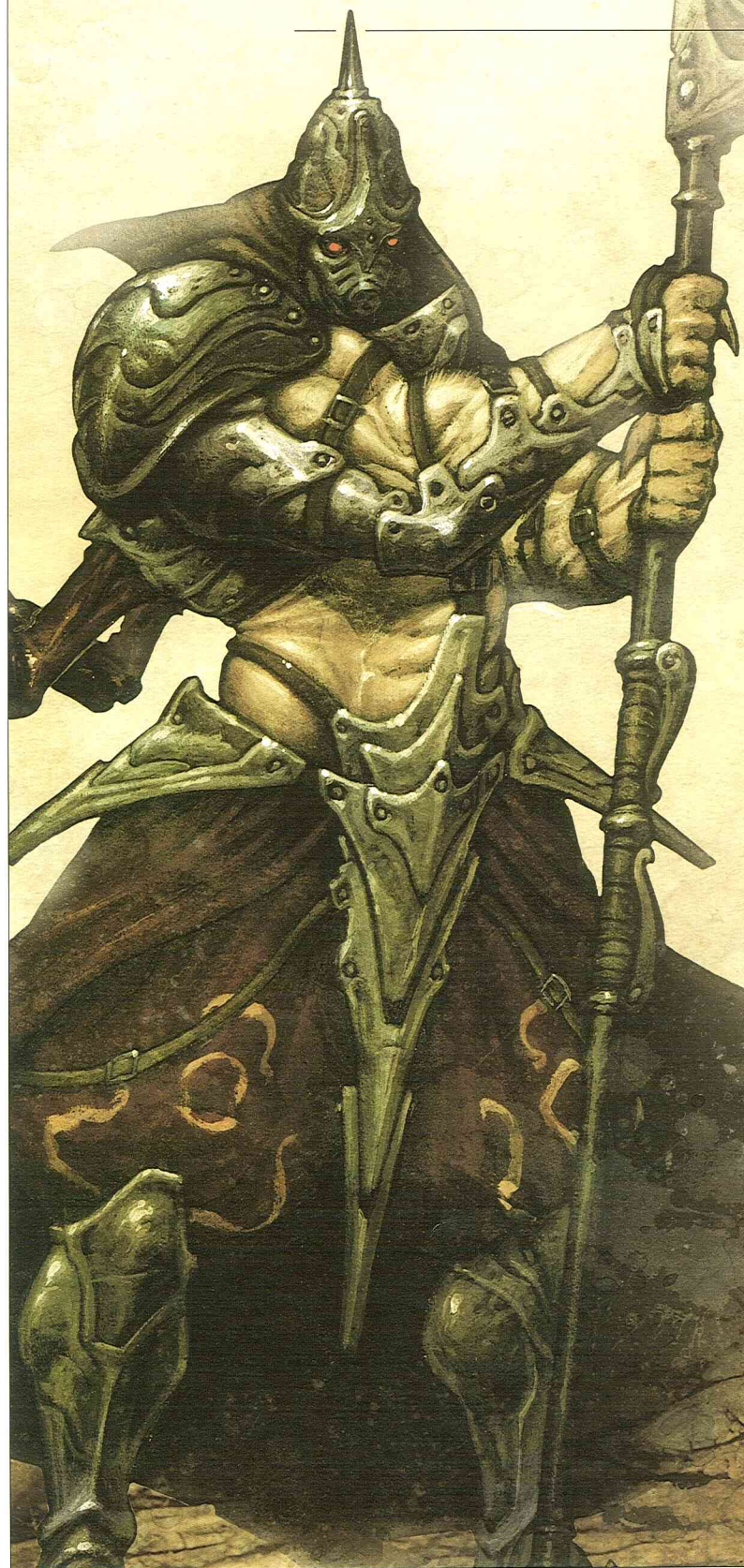
CARDS

Khor knight of Uren (Tir-Nâ-Bor)
 Aegher the Brief (Tir-Nâ-Bor)
 Sîn Assyris (HYBRID)
 Vicar of Dirz (HYBRID)
 Stone of Blood (Nexus)
 Siege engineer (Cadwallon)

Chief servant ogre (Cadwallon)
 Wrecker dwarf (Cadwallon)
 Expert sapper orc (Cadwallon)
 Dance of the eclipse (Managarm)
 Shengûl's fury (Managarm)

These cards cannot be sold separately from Cry Havoc ! volume 3.

editorial



"CRY HAVOC, GIVE NO QUARTER!"

"FIRE!" "SHOOT!" "UNLEASH THE STEAM!"
ARE ALL ORDERS CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD BY THE
SERVANTS OF *FORTIFICATION* MINIATURES.

WHILE THE BALLISTAE MAKE THEIR APPEARANCE AMONG THE
RANKS OF THE LIONS OF ALAHAN AND THE GRIFFINS HOLD
A SURPRISE IN STORE FOR 2005, THIS THIRD ISSUE OF *CRY
HAVOC* COVERS THE TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS THAT
TRANSFORM THE MILITARY LANDSCAPE OF THE RAG'NAROK.

THIS IS THE OCCASION FOR ALL OF US TO DISCOVER THAT
WHILE THE GOBLINS AND DWARVES BEGET WACKY INVENTIONS,
CERTAIN HUMAN NATIONS AREN'T LEFT OUT AND FULLY
PARTICIPATE IN THE RACE FOR TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTIONS.

CRY HAVOC HAS NEVERTHELESS NOT FORGOTTEN THE PEOPLES
THAT HAVE RENOUNCED THIS ARMS RACE. THIS VOLUME ALSO
DWELLS ON THE CULTURES RICH IN MAGIC RITUALS AND IN
ANIMISTIC BELIEFS THAT RESIST THE INVASION OF MACHINES.

THE RAG'NAROK WILL NOT ONLY BE THE AGE OF
DARKNESS, BUT ALSO THAT OF THE STRUGGLE OF MANA
AND THE GODS AGAINST MACHINES OF ALL SORTS.

HYBRID'S FIRST BIRTHDAY IS THE OPPORTUNITY TO INTRODUCE
OPTIONAL RULES IN THE *GAMING AIDS* BOOKLET (GAMES
WITH MORE THAN TWO PLAYERS THANKS TO NEW FACTIONS,
MOVING IN TOTAL DARKNESS, ETC.). IN ADDITION THERE ARE
THREE ADVENTURES FOR *CONFRONTATION* AND *RAG'NAROK*,
WHICH PIT THE DEVOURERS AGAINST THE ALCHEMISTS OF
DIRZ, AS WELL AS FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE ON
PLAYING AN ARMY OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF BRONZE.

WE WISH YOU ENJOYABLE READING.

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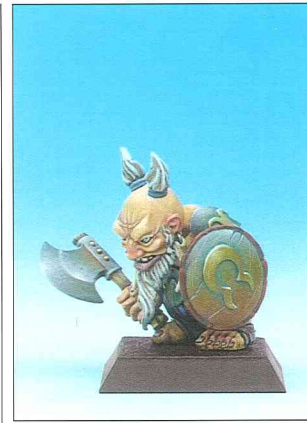
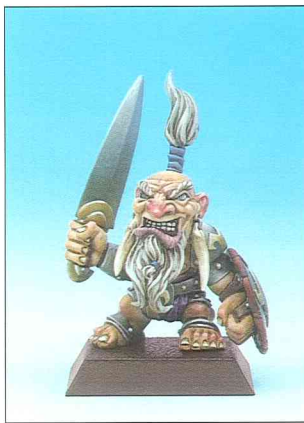
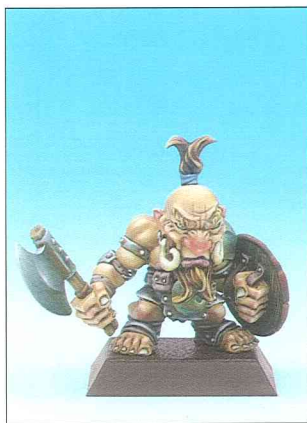
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DWARVES OF TIR-NÂ-BOR

SOLDIERS OF THE PLAINS



T

he tenacity and the valour of these warriors have become legendary all over Aarklash. It is said that the blood of the mountains flows in their veins...

The soldiers of the plains are fighters of Regular rank for the army of the dwarves of Tir-Nâ-Bor. This box contains all the elements needed to build a Unit of eight different soldiers of the plains (with a choice of two different weapons) as well as the accessories needed to turn one of them into a Leader.

THIS BOX INCLUDES:

8 MINIATURES AND 3 REFERENCE CARDS.

RANK: DWARF REGULAR. 11 A.P.





WOLFEN WARRIORS THE FANGS OF THE MOON-GODDESS



T

he sounds of the forest go silent when Yllia, the moon, illuminates the night sky with her pallid eye. Then the Wolfen's howls can be heard, letting their frightened prey know that the hunt has begun. The Fangs of the Moon-goddess, free, noble and savage, ensure that the only true law is respected: the law of nature, the survival of the fittest.

The five Wolfen presented in this box are a small revolution to themselves. The various body parts and weapons are completely interchangeable and can be assembled in endless different positions. A whole army of these fierce creatures can be built without any two miniatures being identical! The Fangs of the Moon-goddess are supplied with two different heads (fang warrior and great fang) and two Leader kits for RAG'NAROK.

THIS BOX INCLUDES:

5 MODULAR WOLFEN MINIATURES AND 3 CARDS: THE FANGS OF THE MOON-GODDESS (EXPLANATORY CARD), WOLFEN FANG WARRIOR (REFERENCE CARD) AND WOLFEN GREAT FANG (REFERENCE CARD).

WOLFEN FANG WARRIOR.
RANK: WOLFEN REGULAR. 25 A.P.

WOLFEN GREAT FANG
RANK: WOLFEN REGULAR. 32 A.P.



• CYNWÄLL CONSTRUCTS •

UKCYFR01



THIS BLISTER PACK CONTAINS:

2 MINIATURES AND 2 CARDS: CYNWÄLL CONSTRUCT WARRIOR (REFERENCE CARD), LUMINOUS STRANGLEHOLD (EXPLANATORY CARD).

RANK: CYNWÄLL SPECIAL. 35 A.P.

The abominable horde of Acheron was drowning the army of Light in a continuous flow of blackness. The Cynwäll ranks fell back and demonic laughs were beginning to be heard. But they didn't last long: the scattered elves made way for a cohort of metallic warriors insensitive to pain. The square of constructs, a marvel of precision and coordination, easily crushed the disorderly and grimacing legion of the dead.

They add extraordinary strike force and endurance (ATT/STR 5/7; DEF/RES 4/8) to the elves' swift and deadly grace. The "Construct," "Ambidextrous" and "Sequence" abilities give them a definite strategic richness and reflect the mechanical rigour with which they massacre their enemies. The construct warriors are provided with the Luminous Stranglehold rule, which allows them to be given Orders in RAG'NAROK.

CYNWÄLL AZURE HUNTER
• CYNWÄLL CROSSBOWWOMEN •

UKCYTR01



THIS BLISTER PACK CONTAINS:

3 MINIATURES AND 1 CARD: CYNWÄLL AZURE HUNTER (REFERENCE CARD).

RANK: CYNWÄLL VETERAN. 26 A.P.

The cyclops from the chasms of Mid-Nor was slaughtering and trampling all who were brave enough to get near him. A ring of hesitant warriors soon formed around the creature hungering for carnage. The cyclops's hateful gaze scanned the gathering around him, looking for his next victim. It landed on an elf who was pointing her uniquely shaped crossbow at the being. That was the last thing the monster saw: a metallic spark hit him in his only eye, making a spine-chilling scream burst forth from his throat.

Armed with a helianthic crossbow/STR 6, range 20-40-60, the azure hunters count among the best markswomen of Aarklash. Their high Movement (MOV 12.5), combined with the "Concentration/1" (INI, ATT) and "Sharp shooter" abilities, allows them to always hit targets of Large Size at medium range, or to march and fire while remaining infallible at short range. They therefore make up a mobile and very versatile support for the Cynwälls.

ALDENYSS THE QUIET,
• FALCONER HERO OF ALAHAN •

UKLIHE03



THIS BLISTER PACK CONTAINS:

1 MINIATURE AND 4 CARDS.

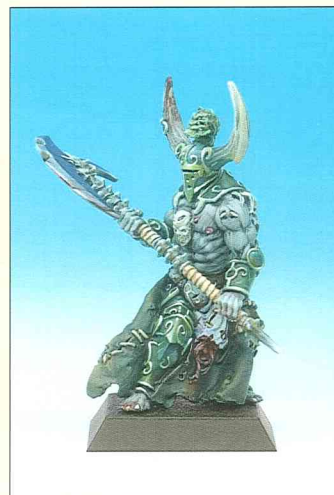
RANK: LION SPECIAL CHAMPION. 70 A.P.

A loyal friend of Kyllion, the Barhan commander of Fort Kaiber's, Aldenyss is considered to be one of the kingdom's best falconers. The eyes of Silentz, his falcon, have permitted the Lions to be victorious on numerous occasions.

Introduced in the novel *The Fault of Kaiber* by William Hawk, Aldenyss is a very all-round Character who, for 70 A.P., is just at ease at the head of an army in CONFRONTATION as he is leading a Unit of falconers in RAG'NAROK. His characteristics (ATT/STR 5/5; DEF/RES 6/5; AIM 3; DIS 4), combined with the "Bravery," "Sequence," "Harassment" and "Bane/Scout" abilities, make him a Character who is at once untypical and very versatile.

WANDYR THE BLOODTHIRSTY
• KARNAGH DRUNE HERO •

UKDRHE02



THIS BLISTER PACK CONTAINS:

1 MINIATURE AND 3 CARDS: WANDYR THE BLOODTHIRSTY (REFERENCE CARD), KILGORM, FORMOR AXE (ARTEFACT, 16 A.P.), THE AXES' SONG (EXPERIENCE CARD, 12 A.P.).

RANK: KELT ELITE CHAMPION. 107 A.P.

Missing was a powerful warlord to take command of a Drune army in Rag'Narok. Missing was a true butcher coming from the Black Woods who could rival the most formidable Champions. Along came Wandyr the Bloodthirsty...

Wandyr is a tough warrior champion (ATT/STR 6/9; DEF/RES 5/8, Brutal, Possessed) who is also an excellent commander for the army of Drune Kelts (COU 7; DIS 6; Leadership/15). Kilgorm, a powerful former axe, increases the potential of this hero and of the friendly Karnaghs in his vicinity by giving them the "Fierce" ability.



The first 3000 copies of this publication include a limited edition miniature: the living legend Drac Mac Syro.

RAG·NAROK®

“
BATTLES ARE
WON OR LOST,
YET HEROES
LIVE FOREVER

Drac Mac Syro”

THIS BOX INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:

A rulebook of 144 full-colour pages with over 200 photographs, allowing you to build an army and wage battles.

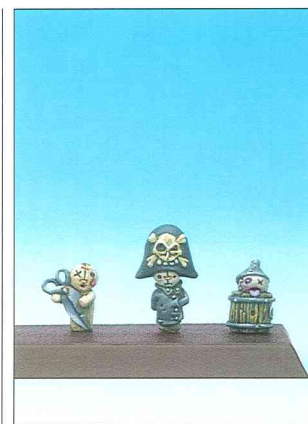
A background book of 128 full-colour pages with over 400 illustrations, in which the fantasy world of Aarklash and its peoples are described.

A summarising reference sheet and 229 counters that symbolise the manoeuvres during the game. 55 cards of Champions, Tactics, Rituals, and Communions.





DWARVES OF MID-NOR *THE WARRIORS OF THE CHASMS OF MID-NOR*



T

he warriors of the Chasms of Mid-Nor rise from the depths of the earth to carry out the will of their master, the Despot. They prowl under cover of the night, strike without warning, and never leave a corpse behind.

This box includes all you need to create a Unit of eight warriors of the Abyss equipped with two different types of weapons – sword or kukri – as well as the accessories needed to turn one of them into a Leader. The warriors of the Abyss are provided with eight little bonus miniatures that represent their canopic dolls (not supplied with cavalry bases).

THIS BOX INCLUDES:

8 MINIATURES AND 3 REFERENCE CARDS.

RANK: REGULAR OF MID-NOR.
10 A.P.





ALCHEMISTS OF DIRZ THE CLONES OF DIRZ



V

argas Metatron reviewed his new troops. A regiment of fresh clones that had recently been removed from the gestation tanks was standing at attention before him. These warriors passed all the physical and mental tests, and have undergone basic training. Would this be enough to confront the wrath of Merin's hounds? Vargas passed among the ranks. His bronze-coloured skin contrasted with the ivory colour of that of these fighters. "They will burn," he thought to himself. "They'll get used to it." Suddenly he spoke. "Welcome to a pitiless world, warriors. Each one of

you will be given his basic equipment. Then you'll go and train. Tomorrow we will fight the orcs. Know to show yourselves worthy of Dirz, our creator!"

The series of regiment boxes continues with regular troops of the Scorpion empire: the Clones of Dirz. This box includes eight modular miniatures (of which five are previously unreleased), clusters of weapons that let you change your warriors' profiles depending on the chosen equipment, as well as a kit to turn one of your fighters into a Leader.

THIS BOX INCLUDES:

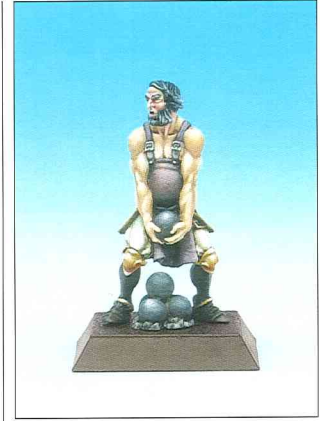
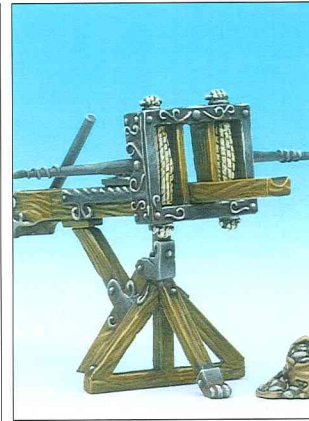
8 MINIATURES AND 3 REFERENCE CARDS.

RANK: SCORPION REGULARS.
II A.P.





LIONS OF ALAHAN *THE BALLISTAE OF THE LION*



T

he Kelts charged the Lion's fortifications. Outnumbered by two to one, the warriors of Alahan didn't have a chance. Their general ordered a strategic retreat. The barbarians made fun of their opponents. The madmen! Once they had come within range of the hastily raised batteries of ballistae, their assault was halted by a hail of stones. Lacking protective gear, the Kelts were decimated by the swarm of whistling projectiles. The Lions, victorious thanks to their strategy, launched a counteroffensive that swept away the tribes of Avagddu's dreams of conquest.

Ballistae can be armed with three different types of projectiles: spears (Heavy artillery; STR 14) that can reach altitude level 2; boulders (Light artillery with zone effect; STR 10) to be used in all kind of situations, and loose stones (Heavy artillery with zone effect; STR 8), which are perfect for mowing down foot soldiers at short range. Their servants are presented with three different abilities: Minelayer, Mechanic/4 and Sapper/5.

THIS BOX INCLUDES:

9 MINIATURES (3 BALLISTAE AND 6 SERVANTS) AND 7 CARDS: BALLISTA OF ALAHAN (REFERENCE CARD IN THREE COPIES), BALLISTA OF ALAHAN SERVANT (REFERENCE CARD IN THREE COPIES), THE BALLISTAE OF ALAHAN (EXPLANATORY CARD).

BALLISTA OF ALAHAN
RANK: LION SPECIAL. 55 A.P.

BALLISTA OF ALAHAN SERVANT
RANK: LION SPECIAL. 16 A.P.



UKLIFR!



ORCS OF BRAN-Ô-KOR ORC BRUTES



A

fter centuries of fierce guerrilla warfare, the orcs have gathered into a formidable army and are preparing for vengeance of the most dreadful kind! May the orcs' enemies tremble in fear!

The orc brutes are fighters of Regular rank for the army of Bran-Ô-Kor. This box contains the elements needed to build a Unit of seven different orc brutes (with a choice of two different weapons) as well as the accessories needed to turn one of them into a Leader.

THIS BOX INCLUDES:

7 MINIATURES AND 3 REFERENCE CARDS.

RANK: ORC REGULAR.
17 A.P.

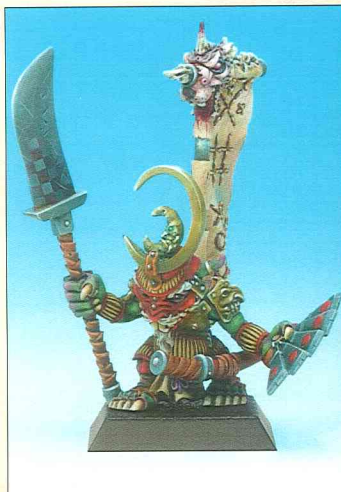


UKORRAGI

• BŪSHI CHAMPION • • BAZŪKA, THE TYRANT OF THE ŪRAKEN CLAN •



UKGBCH05



THIS BLISTER PACK INCLUDES:

1 MINIATURE AND 3 CARDS:
BAZŪKA (REFERENCE CARD), THE
TYRANT OF THE ŪRAKEN CLAN
(EXPLANATORY CARD), TZŪNAMI
(ARTEFACT, 19 A.P.).
RANK: GOBLIN ELITE CHAMPION. 100 A.P.



Bazūka is one of the cruellest and most zealous disciples of shogun Ūraken. He heads the repression forces gathered to crush the revolt of the Yakūza clan on the island of Zoukhoui. After having gotten dazzling results, Bazūka began a programme of methodical extermination. It isn't hard to understand that Bazūka would want to make his pleasure last.

What could be better, when one is a bloodthirsty madman, than being mandated by Emperor Izothop himself to burn, slaughter and terrorise a whole island?

Bazūka is the first champion of the new oriental-themed range for the goblins of No-Dan-Kar. This merciless warrior ("Survival instinct," "Feint" and "War fury" abilities) is also a good army chief for CONFRONTATION and RAG'NAROK (Elite Champion, Leadership/10, COU 6, DIS 5).



UKGBSP07



THIS BLISTER PACK INCLUDES:

2 MINIATURES AND 2 CARDS:
GOBLIN BŪSHI (REFERENCE
CARD), THE GOBLIN BŪSHIS
(EXPLANATORY CARD).

RANK: GOBLIN SPECIAL. 15 A.P.



Būshis are the disciples of the school of shogun Ūraken. They teach the principles of the way of the sabre to their students and make discipline reign in their ranks.

The goblin būshis give many advantages to the army of No-Dan-Kar. First of all with their profile: balanced combat characteristics (INI 3; ATT/STR 3/5; DEF/RES 3/5) and the "Feint" ability give them a good faculty to adapt to any situation. Secondly, their special capacity provides bonuses to the Tactical Roll in CONFRONTATION and makes them all-round Leaders in RAG'NAROK. And finally, the theme: the coming months will be rich in new fighters of the Ūraken school...

• CYNWĀLL ADEPT • • GALHYAN, CYNWALL HELIAST •



UKCYMA01



THIS BLISTER PACK INCLUDES:

1 MINIATURE AND 7 CARDS:
GALHYAN, CYNWALL HELIAST (REFERENCE CARD), SOLAR CROWN
(ARTEFACT, 15 A.P.), GALHYAN'S
MASQUERADE (ARTEFACT, 18 A.P.),
SOLAR ARMY (RITUAL, 20 A.P.),
CHAIN OF AUTOMATONS (RESERVED
SPELL, 14 A.P.), FORGE OF
THE HELIASTS (SPELL, 13 A.P.),
BLINDING FLASH (SPELL, 12 A.P.).

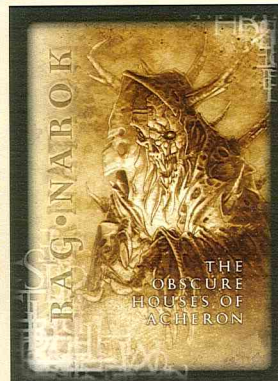
RANK: CYNWĀLL ADEPT.
95 A.P.

The varsjym scout presented himself to Galhyan. Around them the warriors were ready for combat. Their minds were already set for the torment of battle. "They refuse to surrender, my lord. They are ready to fight to the bitter end." "So be it," answered the heliast while putting on one of his many masks. "Sons of the Dragon, at my command!" The mineral eyes of a contingent of constructs began glowing with an inhuman shimmer. Choosing to confront the Cynwālls means accepting to die.

Galhyan combines the advantages of a fighter, of a commander, and of a magician, yet without being overly specialised in any of these three categories. This Adept of Light and of Water (POW 6) masters the paths of solaris and chronomancy (the path of the synchronous warrior-mages). Galhyan is a good army chief in CONFRONTATION and excels in RAG'NAROK.



UKMVAR01



The Houses of Acheron reign over the accursed barony. Become the lord of one of them and go on the conquest of the world of the living! This packet of cards allows you to choose among the seven Obscure Houses of Acheron and create thematic armies characterised by a strong identity and their own special rules.

THIS PACKET INCLUDES:

16 CARDS: 1 illustrated cover card, The Obscure Houses of Acheron (explanatory card), 7 explanatory cards of the Obscure Houses (Hestia, Brisis, Vanth, Lazarian, Mantis, Sarlath and Tanit), Awakening of the Demon (miracle, 14 A.P.), The Fiancée of the Tomb (special capacity for the banshees of Acheron), Hecate's Fury (spell, 12 A.P.), Gravedigger of Salaüel (alternative living-dead profile, 31 A.P.), The Eye of Kaïan (ritual with special value), Phylactery of Power (magic object, 13 A.P.) and Impulse of Death (spell, 12 A.P.).



UKWFA01



This packet of cards is chock full of ideas for Wolfen armies. It presents five emblematic Wolfen packs and allows thematic armies to be built around special rules bound to them. It's even possible to combine several Wolfen packs in RAG'NAROK.

THIS PACKET INCLUDES:

16 CARDS: 1 illustrated cover card, The Wolfen Packs (explanatory card), 5 Wolfen pack cards (The Red Oaks, The Twilight Hills, The Wheel of Dreams, The Path of Opal and The Throne of Stars), Isakar the Watcher (Second Incarnation card, 90 A.P.), Wolfen Shadow Tracker (exclusive profile card, 37 A.P.), She-wolf of Ice (exclusive Warrior-mage profile card, 60 A.P.), The Wolves of Ice (explanatory card), Wolfen Sentinel (alternative profile of Wolfen Crossbowman, 44 A.P.), The Fangs of the Stars: Nylira (magic object, 30 A.P.), The Talisman of the Scribe (magic object, 16 A.P.), Rage of the Red Oaks (Communion, 40 A.P.) and The Mask of Gandhar (spell, 4 A.P.).



THIS BOX CONTAINS:

6 MINIATURES AND 7 CARDS: AGONN THE ARDENT (REFERENCE CARD), MUSICIAN OF ALAHAN (REFERENCE CARD), STANDARD-BEARER OF ALAHAN (REFERENCE CARD), KAÏBER VETERAN (REFERENCE CARD), HEROIC CHARGE (TACTIC CARD FOR RAG'NAROK), OFFICER OF THE LION (SPECIAL CAPACITY, 16 A.P.), INSIGNIA OF ARIN'S GLAIVE (ARTEFACT, 12 A.P.).

• AGONN THE ARDENT
RANK: LION REGULAR CHAMPION.
42 A.P.
This box includes a brand new sculpture of the Champion Agonn the Ardent.

• MUSICIAN OF ALAHAN
RANK: LION REGULAR.
15 A.P.

• STANDARD-BEARER OF ALAHAN
RANK: LION REGULAR.
15 A.P.

• KAÏBER VETERAN
RANK: LION VETERAN.
18 A.P.

The warriors of Alahan only live to let the ideals of Light triumph. A valiant heart and an unwavering will are needed to survive the horrors of war. Agonn and his war-staff are of these stalwart fighters who remain loyal to their convictions after having encountered a thousand dangers. Accompanied by Kaïber veterans, this Unit is ready to be played in Rag'Narok. Moreover, its numbers can be complemented with a box of Kaïber Guardsmen.



• WAR-STAFF OF THE GRIFFIN: WARRIORS OF THE CRUSADES •



THIS BOX CONTAINS:

6 MINIATURES AND 6 CARDS: ABEL THE ILL-TEMPERED (REFERENCE CARD), GRIFFIN MUSICIAN (REFERENCE CARD), GRIFFIN STANDARD-BEARER (REFERENCE CARD), VETERAN OF THE CRUSADES (REFERENCE CARD), RIGHTEOUS CHASTISEMENT (TACTIC CARD FOR RAG'NAROK), CHASTISEMENT (ARTEFACT, 15 A.P.).

• ABEL THE ILL-TEMPERED
RANK: GRIFFIN REGULAR CHAMPION.
51 A.P.
This box includes a brand new sculpture of the Champion Abel the Ill-tempered.

• GRIFFIN MUSICIAN
RANK: GRIFFIN REGULAR.
17 A.P.

• GRIFFIN STANDARD-BEARER
RANK: GRIFFIN REGULAR.
18 A.P.

• VETERAN OF THE CRUSADES
RANK: GRIFFIN VETERAN
19 A.P.



Countless regiments of the Griffin fight all over Aarklash. Some people claim that the god Merin's disciples wish to enslave the world. Others assert that they wish to liberate it. Yet the warriors of the crusades are well aware: they confront Evil in the name of their faith and of Light. Accompanied by veterans of the crusades, this Unit is ready to be played in Rag'Narok. Moreover, its numbers can be complemented with a box of Griffin Conscripts.



AARKLASH, AS FAR AS THE EYE COULD SEE...

I have travelled the continent and braved its dangers. I have seen the towers of the proud castles of Alahan defy the stars, and the lush plains of Avagddu ablaze with the flames of war. I have crossed the grey, gloomy and sterile moors of Acheron and have glimpsed death incarnate.

I have survived the implacable Syhar desert with its endless dunes that are moved like waves by the sand-laden winds, its blistering days and freezing nights. I have lived among the orkish tribes sheltered in their canyons of red rock and have shared in their struggle against their oppressors.

I have sailed to the shores of Diisha and have explored the territories of the powerful Wolfen, where the shadows of the gigantic trees reach for many leagues.

I have journeyed up the Ynkarô, the river that separates the domains of the elven nations, and have braved the thick emerald jungle of Quithayran, a place with a green and luminous atmosphere that glows with life and that resembles what the world must have looked like when it was young.

I have survived the wickedness of the forest of webs of Ashinân, the accursed lair of the Akkyshan, a jungle with monstrous shadows that has an aura of brutal hostility.

I have climbed the Cynwälls' mountains and discovered their cities perched high up in the clouds.

I have explored the lands of No-Dan-Kar and saw incredible cities, the results of the agglomeration of thousands of constructions of various styles and materials, bustling labyrinths pulsating to the frantic rhythm of the goblins' effervescence. I have felt the fervour mixed with fear of Akkylannie, a harsh land where chapels and churches grow faster than wheat.

I have choked in the steam-filled forges of the Aegis Mountains, the domain of the dwarves of Tir-Nâ-Bor.

I have ventured into the abysses of the chasms of Mid-Nor, the underground realm peopled by demons, a mineral hell of deformed stalactites. I have known the horror of the Drones' jails of mud and blood, and have miraculously escaped the morbid fate of the prisoners of the Black Woods.

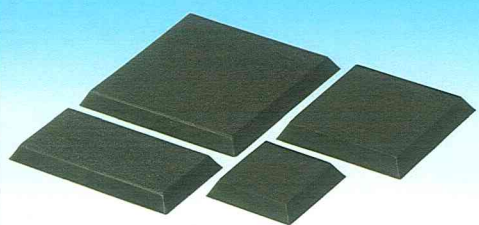
I have strolled the terraces of the upper city of Cad-wallon, where the peaceful cohabitation of the various peoples gives the illusion of an alternative to war...

I have travelled the continent and have glimpsed its beauty, its richness and its mysteries.

EXCERPT FROM THE INTRODUCTION
OF KYLLION THE ELDER'S TRAVEL JOURNALS.

MINIATURES ON A PEDESTAL

Aarklash is a continent with varying and exotic landscapes where each people evolves in its own specific environment. The decoration of bases strengthens the rendering of your RACKHAM miniatures by highlighting them with a touch of realism.



FOUR SURFACES OF EXPRESSION
FOR A MULTITUDE OF RENDERINGS.



MATERIALS

This is a list of the elements needed
to create our customised bases:

- Cork (natural bark, from a bottle, board)
- Fine sand or ground peach pits
- Cyanoacrylate glue
- Spare parts of miniatures or of decorative elements (RACKHAM's range of columns, doors and accessories is ideal)
- A box cutter
- A small saw (for the cork)
- A manual drill and thin drill bits (for pinning the miniatures)
- Fine sand paper
- Several pots of paint and a no. 2 paint brush

There are of course other useful materials and many types of shapes and renderings of bases, of which some are shown at the end of this article.

TRIMMING

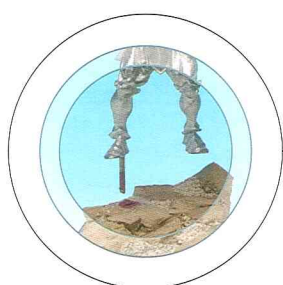
The first step is to trim any traces left on the plastic base by its manufacturing. The parts that stick out most must be removed using a box cutter.

Then the top of the base must be made smooth and flat using fine sandpaper (000).

PINNING YOUR MINIATURES

The creation of a customised base requires the removal of the metal bar used to fix the miniature to its base.

To nevertheless ensure that it can be securely fixed to its base, it is recommended to "pin" the miniature.



To do so, one must carefully cut off the base bar using a wire cutter, and then trim and sand the miniature's feet so as to get a perfectly smooth and even surface. A small hole is then made using the manual drill into the fighter's foot or feet up to its calf while taking care not to create any weak points. With this done, a drop of glue is put into the hole and then a pin of the right diameter is inserted. Wire or unfolded paper clips make excellent pins.

And finally, the pin is cut to a length that lets it be attached to the base in which a small hole has also been drilled.

POSITIONING

The space the miniature's feet will occupy on the base must then be determined, as well as the way it will be facing. These two parameters are very important when deciding on the base's final shape.

Two criteria are taken into account: balance and dynamism. A customised base lets the miniature's position be made more dramatic, but it shouldn't make it take on an unnatural or instable posture.

The miniature's pose and movement determine the way it is positioned on the base. The miniature's main parts and overall composition must be balanced in regard to the base's size, and form a coherent whole.

It is better to build the base before colouring the miniature in order to avoid damaging its paint job and allow the various elements to be handled without risk while positioning them.

COMPOSITION

The designing of a base involves several important artistic notions, such as the balance of volumes, of composition and of matter.

Customising a base means creating a small setting that gives the illusion of being a full landscape. A simple flagstone beneath a Cadwallon adventurer's feet suggests a road; a tree stump and a few elements of vegetation on a Wolfen predator's base transport him to the vast forest of Diisha.

The context is an endless source of inspiration for your creations and each miniature's pose can be made more dramatic in many different ways.

Thus, the ambiance one would like to recreate determines the matter and colours used.

Often the use of natural materials is a good solution. A very realistic looking tree stump can be made using roots, a dolmen can be made using a real stone, lichen can look like a bush, etc. By playing on the scale, one can imitate many textures with a minimum of work.

The disposition of the elements on the base must form an entity on its own (the base on its own must have a balanced composition) at the same time as it takes into account the installing of the miniature. The base must remain secondary and not distract the attention from the miniature, it being the main subject.



ONE TEXTURE, TWO AMBIANCES.

A harmonious whole can be reached by seeking a composition that seems both natural and light. One starts with the basic form, which one then models little by little until getting a satisfying result.

Similarly, the colours have a language that will strengthen and give realism to the base by adding matter to it (warm or cold colours, faded effect, rust, reflections, etc.). A base is painted like a miniature and one can nuance and contrast it at leisure.

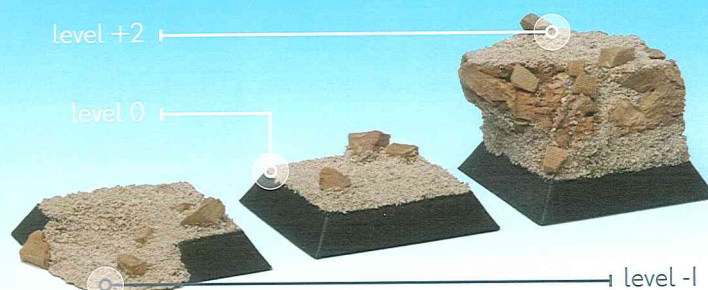
A matter such as sand can be treated in many ways to create various renderings.



mounting AN ARMY ON BASES

When mounting a whole army on customised bases, their level of detail can help form a hierarchy among the miniatures while also giving a certain uniformity to the troops. Miscellaneous miniatures mounted on a same type of base are given harmony and a regimental aspect. Simple soldiers may content themselves with basic bases, but those of characters and elite warriors have everything to gain by being more elaborately worked, and give the opportunity to attempt new experiences by including a piece of a column, a shield or a skull.

Another way to harmonise various miniatures is by adding the fragments of a piece of scenery or of an accessory to several bases (tree stumps, great blades, etc.). These elements split into several parts then become coherent when the bases are placed together in a display or on a gaming table.



THE BASE'S HEIGHT CAN CHANGE THE WAY THE MINIATURE IS PERCEIVED.

CONSTRUCTION

The customised bases used by RACKHAM represent a grassy ground strewn with rocks and ruins. The grass is made using fine sand and the rocks are made from pieces of cork cut using a modeller's knife. Cork has many advantages in addition to the fact that it has a texture that resembles that of stone. It is fairly dense,

has good resilience that allows it to be firmly fixed to the base, isn't abrasive and doesn't damage the miniature's paintjob. Moreover, it can be painted, is easy to cut, and is light and cheap.

One or several pieces of cork are cut and then glued to the base **(1)**. At first the rough shapes are enough, as long as they evoke the outlines of the elements they are supposed to represent (a flagstone, a rock, etc.). On the other hand it is very important to cut the cork at the desired height because it is difficult to modify this aspect of the base in the next steps.

To do so, the cork should be cut horizontally with a modeller's knife or a saw, and then made smooth and flat using sand paper so as to look like rock.

It is important to wait for the glue to be dry before sculpting the cork. Once it has been given the desired shape, only the base's details have to be added.

Glue is then applied to the plastic parts of the base that are still visible and onto the foot of the pieces of cork before being sprinkled with fine sand **(2)**.

Sand can be added to upper parts of the cork to imitate moss growing on the rock, for example.

It is often useful to apply two consecutive layers of glue and sand in order to get an even grain on the whole of the base's surface.

In this step small pieces of cork can be added to represent small rocks and pebbles that broke off from the main piece. These small elements add finesse and extra detail to the base **(3)**. As a general rule it is best to put an odd number of small rocks to avoid giving a rather unnatural looking symmetry to the composition.

PAINTING

The sand is painted with a base layer of dark green and the rock is painted a neutral grey. A black wash is applied all over to fill in any hollows and provide contrast. A layer of the base colours is then applied using the drybrush technique, and then the colours are lightened by progressively adding yellow to the green and light grey to the basic grey.

Finally, the edges of the rock are highlighted by adding white to the mix of grey. One can nuance the paintjob by applying a thin wash of brown to certain hollow parts of the rock and the grass.

1



2



3



4



FINISHING

The bases can still be improved by adding the bristles of an old paintbrush (to look like tufts of grass), fake or natural moss or lichen, sawdust, bark, tea, gravel, small pieces of wood, tobacco or seeds.

Some of these elements are added before applying the paintjob (4), others only afterwards because their natural aspect is enough to embellish the base.

These additional elements are added in small amounts depending on the composition of the base and the miniature's position, in order to give balance to the colours and the disposition.



CUSTOMISED BASES REVEAL A PART OF AARKLASH BENEATH THE FEET OF EACH MINIATURE.





The fusion hammer came down and pulverised the heavy steel door with a shower of sparks and projected a spray of molten metal at the goblins who quickly ran off while letting out terrified cries.

Kahinir entered the room. His weapon's red glow made scary shadows dance on his face. Scrutinising the darkness, he advanced in the narrow corridor and signalled his companions to follow him. Hogarth and Alahel obeyed in silence.

"Damn goblins," growled Kahinir with his teeth clenched. "The slums are teeming with that vermin..."

Making sure that the coast was clear, he put down his backpack holding strange gear he had collected during his adventures and pulled an old map from it. He used his hammer as a light to read it while mumbling something.

The dwarf's exceptionally bad mood no longer surprised his companions. They were following Kahinir on the traces of Strycnus, the goblin master assassin who was responsible for his father's death and fall from grace.

Alahel was beginning to get used to the new armour that his friend had forged for him; he barely felt its weight any more. His old armour was destroyed during a combat that could have cost him his life if it hadn't been for his companions' intervention. He lit a torch and wanted to approach Kahinir when he sensed an imminent danger.

He unsheathed his sword, Deliverance, and readied himself, all his senses on alert.

His companions reacted immediately and grabbed their weapons. Hogarth tightly gripped his broadsword and felt the trance of combat take hold of him.

Kahinir made sparks fly by hitting the stone floor with his fusion hammer.

The one who was about to defy these three heroes had better be very sure of himself...

PAINTING GUIDE KAHINIR THE SAVAGE

Kahinir is an adventurer of Tir-Nâ-Bor who has travelled all over the continent of Aarklash. He has confronted many perils and has won the friendship of powerful warriors such as Hogarth the Colossus and Alahel the Messenger. This dwarf's Second Incarnation is the opportunity to present you with a new painting guide...

CHARACTER & COLOURS

The dwarves love technology, complex equipment, heavy armour and bellflower alcohol. Kahinir is living proof of this.

The paintjob of an adventurer of this calibre takes into account his personality as well as the attributes of his people.

Kahinir comes from the Aegis Mountains. The imagery of the dwarves from this region is mainly bound to the forge and to metal. Like his mountain-dwelling brothers with a very tough character, Kahinir wears bright and rich colours.

The metal of Tir-Nâ-Bor can be natural or magical depending on the rank and status of the troops. Alphax, the emblematic alloy of the dwarven people, takes on an iridescent hue, its colours changing with the light.

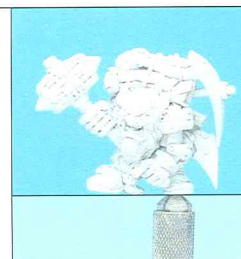
The favourite colours of the natives of the Aegis Mountains reflect their upright character and very direct view of combat. The dwarves don't hide behind drab and faded tones; they announce their presence and their strength by showing their true colours.

Kahinir is a fighter seeking vengeance who tirelessly roams Aarklash on the traces of his father's killer. With his Second Incarnation (available in the *Second Incarnations 2* pack), he has become an armoured and has gained in experience.

These changes must be kept in mind when planning this adventurer's paintjob. The dwarf has grown older and his equipment is marked by his travels. His armour is more elaborate and made out of a nobler metal.

PREPARATION & BASES

After having trimmed the miniature and applied a white undercoat, the base colours are applied. The beard and the hammer are painted caramel brown tending towards orange, the skin is painted flesh colour with a copper hue, and the armour yellow brown. The boots and the glove get a coat of dark brown with a



touch of red. And finally, the backpack is painted with mainly dark colours: chocolate brown for the barrel, the pickaxe's handle and the gasmask, night blue for the blanket, mustard yellow for the bottle, dark grey for the metal parts of the pickaxe, neutral grey for the safe, red black for the leather and orange brown for the metal parts of the sword's baldric.

LEATHER & WEAR

Kahinir's clothes are well worn by his travels and the weather, so the paintjob should reflect the patina and accentuate the leather's cracks in order to show the atmosphere bound to the character's wandering and adventures.





The dark brown base is shaded with consecutive washes of dark blue and then black. The source of light is considered to be above him, so the shading and lightening is done while taking into account this orientation. The contours are then gone over with the base colours while making sure that the passage from one hue to the other is smooth, and by playing on the paint's transparency by diluting it (thus avoiding the "staircase effect" that would look like several lighter and lighter strips without a real blending effect between them).

Then the contours lit by the light from above are highlighted, first by adding red beige and then light grey to the base colour. The last highlights are extremely fine and located on the crests.

These hues allow one to get leather that is at once warm in its dominant colour but which turns colder in its highlights. The surrounding elements being destined to be painted with warm hues, the various zones will stand out more and allow the piece to be "read" easily. The managing of warm and cold colours must be mastered to get the best from a colour scheme.

The leather's cracks, which are important to render the effect of material, are very easy to do. Carefully studying real leather (belts, old jackets) lets one understand how it cracks and breaks at the folds.

The cracks are drawn with a fine paintbrush using a light leather colour made lighter and lighter towards the contours. They mark the leather with irregular lines perpendicular to the element's axis for straps and belts, or spreading out from a zone that bears a specific strain due to a weight or a fold.



ANTIQUE ARMOUR

Kahinir's new armour should also express its wearer's adventurous and wandering character while taking into account his status of armorer, which demands the presence of a specific and precious metal.

Thus, Kahinir has most probably chosen to wear an ancient suit of armour, a masterpiece of craftsmanship.



The yellow brown base is shaded by adding dark brown to the parts opposite the overhead lighting and by accentuating the contrast in the hollows.

Highlights are made by adding ochre brown and then light beige to the base colour. The scratches are painted by making their lower edges much lighter in accordance to the direction of the overhead light.



Most of the armour's scratches and cracks already being sculpted, it isn't necessary to paint them onto the miniature, yet the contours are accentuated by strongly darkening the cracks' hollows.

Oxidation develops in the hollows, where first a light wash of green bronze is applied, then a darker green is added, and a bit of white is placed at the bottom of the hollows.



The bolts are emphasised by applying dark brown and then working them with grey and then light grey.

The final shine is added to all of his armour during the same step in order to gain time, the idea being to make white spots sparkle on the jutting parts that are exposed to the overhead light.



DWARF HEAD!

Being the focal point of a miniature, and especially of a dwarf, the face deserves to be its most worked and most luminous part.

The base colour is a flesh tone going on yellow. It is shaded by adding a touch of red brown and medium brown, at first in small proportions, and then in bigger ones for the hollows.



The reddish parts of the cheeks, the ears and the nose are painted at the same time with a mix of bright red and the basic flesh tone. They are then shaded progressively with more and more red added to the mix, and pure red is even used in certain hollows (around the nostrils, beneath the cheeks and the nose, and in the ears).



The main surfaces are again shaded using the basic flesh tone. The passage from the darkened colour to this base colour creates the richness of the hue and helps the volumes stand out. The parts jutting out are then made lighter by adding white to the flesh tone, just like for metallic parts yet without going all the way to pure white.

The colour chosen for the eyes depends on the hair and on the overall colour scheme. In this case Kahinir has red hair, so his eyes should be green.



A LUMINOUS BEARD

Like most dwarves, Kahinir is proud of his beard and grooms it with great care. Hair, a mane or a beard can be painted in various ways depending on if one wishes to make them appear dirty and tangled or rather clean and tidy, even glossy.

Hair can be marked by time and get white streaks or become grey at the temples. It can become reddened by fire, dyed, or, as in Mirà's case, naturally be of an unusual colour.

Kahinir's red beard is that of a dwarven hero who has been marked by the years and the battles; so the first white streaks have appeared.

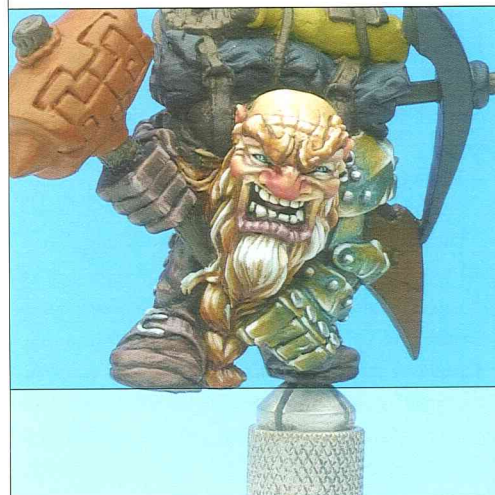


The paintjob of this type of element should allow volumes to be distinguished easily by highlighting them with the creation of a shiny effect on the areas exposed to the overhead light. This effect works if the light follows the curves of the shapes and the movement of the hairs.



The base colour is orange going on brown, which is shaded in several consecutive steps with a dark red brown applied in thin, semi-transparent layers. Yet the contrast between this shading and the base colour must not be too strong, its goal being to create a first emphasis by letting the main contours stand out. Nevertheless, it is the highlighting that plays the most important role and gives volume.

The base colour is then applied again to the areas to be made lighter by progressively adding egg-yolk yellow and by applying the paint to the contours as well as the hollows. If the latter remain dark, then dark lines appear by contrast between the hairs, which would make them look dirty.



The lightening continues on to a yellow colour while taking care that the hollows of the grooves are made light enough. The simplest thing to do is consider that there are no grooves and to treat the shape as if it were flat.

The final highlighting is done by adding white and ivory to the yellow. The grooves are taken into account for this last step of highlighting, and the hollow parts are left as they were in the previous step.

The shiny effect is now created by simulating the beard's reflection on the part that juts out as if it were one big mass.

The greying temples are obtained by shading the orange base with medium grey made lighter and lighter until reaching white.

AN ADVENTURER'S MATERIAL

The accumulation of objects and accessories on certain miniatures is sometimes a painter's challenge, for it is hard to make an area encumbered with details very "readable." Two basic principles are used for this type of work: that of warm and cold colours for contrast, and that of complementary colours (meaning opposed on the chromatic circle).



The items collected by Kahinir are very diverse: a flask of cactus alcohol from Bran-Ô-Kor, a Cynwäll blanket, a steam mask and a small Akkylannian safe are just a few of the many trophies carried by this dwarven adventurer.



Every piece of Kahinir's backpack is made of a different material that defines it among the mass of objects (fine cloth, wood, rusted steel, shiny leather, dry and crackled leather, enamelled ceramic, etc.).

To separate these items correctly, they are taken into account on their own – their composition and their colours – but also in relation to the other items. For this reason pouches can be painted using cold colours to make them stand out less and highlight



the more interesting pieces of equipment. Another solution can be to repeat certain hues to avoid getting a patchwork of clashing colours.



THE FUSION HAMMER

This magic hammer is Kahinir's emblematic item. The glowing material it is made of is red with internal heat and the goal of this weapon's paintjob is to render the fusion effect in a realistic way.

The principle is the exact opposite of the usual highlighting technique. The lightened parts are inside the hollows and the outside parts are made darker the further they are from the hot core.



The base colour is caramel orange, which is made lighter in the engravings using from bright yellow to intense pure yellow. The outline of the engravings is lightened to simulate the light shining from the grooves.

White is added to intensify the effect of heat in the grooves (yet without completely filling them) to give an illusion of movement in the molten metal. Too much white would cause the heat effect to be lost and would give the engravings a drawn and artificial look.

The flat surfaces are then shaded by applying darker and darker red (by adding black to it) to one small area at a time to give life and matter to the effect.

The darkest areas are those at the centre of the even surfaces. For "readability's" sake, and to define the limits well, the hammer's two striking surfaces are lightened with grey and then white.

THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES...

Kahinir is ready to carry on his travels and a customised base is added to emphasise the rich character of this piece. A few elements that evoke Kahinir's history are added to the usual customised base made with cork and sand. The shoulder piece of an amok slayer's armour and a brontops tusk suggest recent epic battles, and the mountain vegetation gives an idea of where this adventurer usually roams.



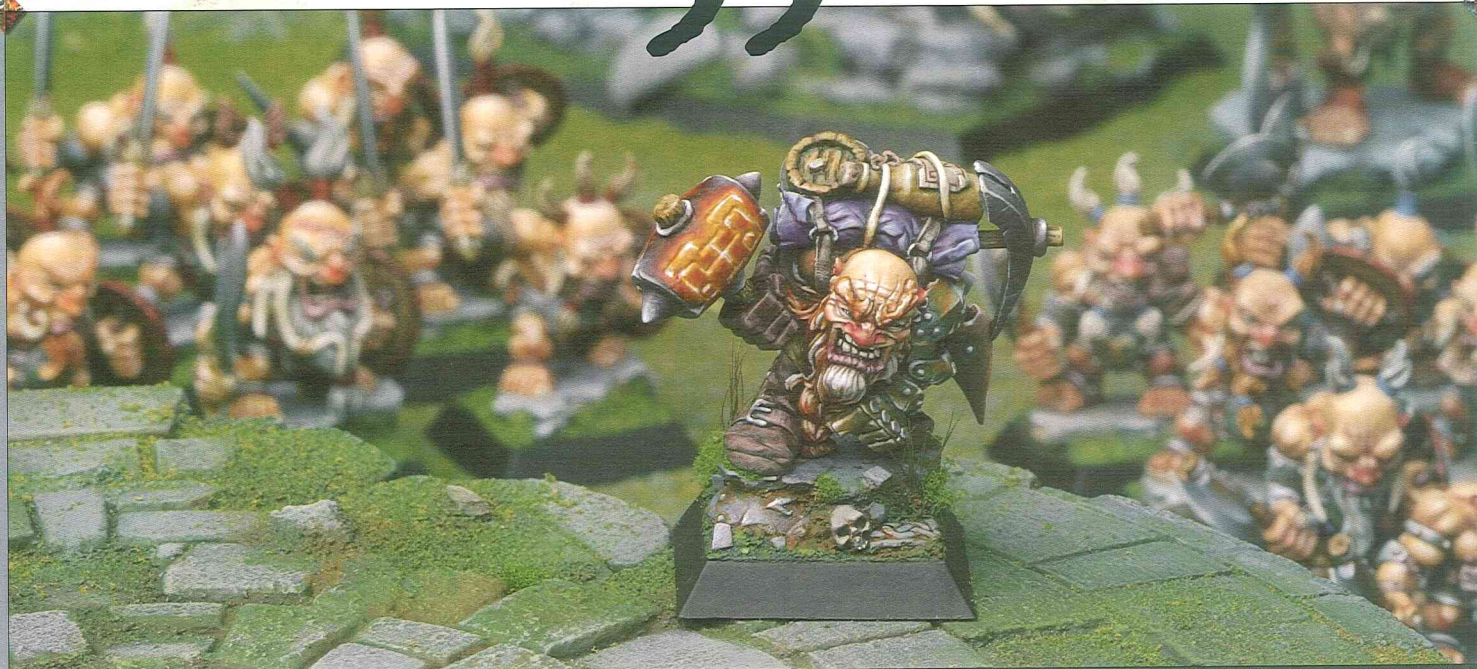
Panting, Kahinir advanced at a fast pace on the mountain trail. For several days now he has been stalking the troop of goblins that was accompanying Strycnius, his sworn enemy. Exhausted, the soldiers of the plains could no longer keep up with him. That accursed assassin was going to escape him once again!

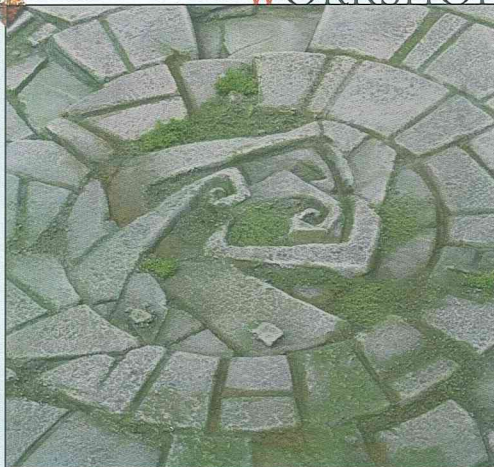
When he reached the crest he could finally see the No-Dan-Kar troops fleeing as if all the demons of Acheron were on their tails. The adventurer's face broke into a wolfish grin. At last, vengeance was within his reach!





“
You will learn to fear me!
”





FANTASY ARCHITECTURE FLAGSTONES OF LEGEND

The articles in the previous issues of *Cry Havoc* covered the technique of using plaster of Paris to build settings and scenery. This material, which imitates stone and its specific grain so well, can be used to create architectural elements that are realistic in their shape and texture.

A MAZE?

"Hmmm... These designs are fascinating..."

Karolin of the High Academy of Imperial Architecture of Klüne, an expert in ancient flagstones, was carefully studying the arabesques decorating the stone floor. The pointy tip of his nose was drawing lines in the dust while he examined the delicate spirals of granite.

"These glyphs indicate the position of the cardinal stars and place the building in the cosmic order."

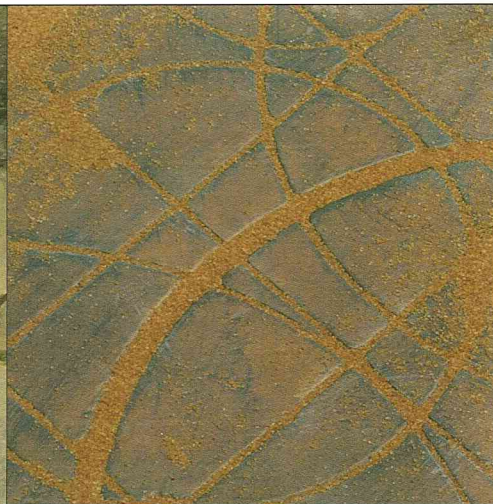
Snapping his fingers, Karolin called the troll who was his mobile work platform. He jumped up the steps attached to the enormous creature and sat down behind his desk. From this high position he could study the entire flagstone floor.

Something in this room just didn't seem right to him. He was about to mention this to the member of the guild of Architects who was his guide when he saw Solkarlus, his apprentice, hiding behind a column. The brat was waving with his arms as a warning signal. Karolin thought better of it and took on an at once surprised and severe expression.

"Ah! Solkarlus! Where have you been? Come and show me your work, and woe you haven't done it correctly!"

Once his student was on the platform, Karolin pretended to inspect his notes while the brat whispered into his ear.

"Master, I have discovered that the room in which you are is only a replica. It seems that the guild invited you to Cadwallon to benefit from your expertise for free. If I understood correctly, the flagstones that interest you so much are in reality a key to a passage leading to the chasms. We had best return to Klüne..."



INSPIRATION

Though the material remains the same, the procedure and the engraving change depending on the element one wishes to create.

Floors made of flagstones are frequently used when designing settings by the RACKHAM studios. The flagstone floors of temples, of citadel ruins, or of the remains of buildings destroyed by war and slowly retaken by nature, all evoke historical events and enrich the world of Aarklash.

Floors can suggest the size of a building, its importance, and even its function if symbolic elements are used wisely. (The cross-shaped floor plan of churches and cathedrals is the most obvious example.)

The way flagstone floors are built is bound to antique architecture and has evolved over the centuries. From the simple assembly of pavestones to the complex layout of flagstones (sometimes richly decorated with mosaics, sculpted in bas-reliefs, or with a quality that simply stems from their proportions), floors take on various aspects depending on the epoch and the civilisation that laid them.

PROJECT

The minute designing of a setting's floor provides it with high added value, be it destined for gaming or for use as a diorama.

How the creation of this type of element proceeds depends on several factors that require a minimum of planning. The setting's function defines the level of detail, of complexity and of fragility that can be permitted.

A setting made for gaming must place emphasis on sturdiness and on practicality since it will often



be handled. One should avoid adding too many contours that may hinder troop deployment when playing games.

CREATION & DECORATION

A diorama, on the other hand, can include numerous details and decorations, and benefit from a more elaborate work of sculpturing; it isn't subjected to the same need for solidity.

The flooring can be an integral and permanent part of a larger setting (such as the ruins of a castle that reveals the remains of ancient floors strewn with fallen rocks), or be independent and easily placed into various configurations.

What does one wish to represent? What kind of pavement? Floors can be arranged in a checkerboard, a spiral, in an anarchic way, symmetrically or not, with geometrical forms, decorated with mosaics, made up of various types of stones or tiles... the possibilities are endless. The flagstones can be set neatly next to each other or can partially overlap. The mortar joint between the tiles can be more or less thick.

Arabesques, glyphs, motifs and bas-reliefs can be added to give character and life to your creations.

The floor's aspect is also determined by the geographic situation. Griffin flagstone floors don't look like those of an Ophidian ruin or a Cynwall palace. A reference to Aarklash's culture places the setting in the perspective of a rich universe and helps make it realistic.

Depending on if it is located inside or outside, the flooring doesn't age in the same way. Has it been walked upon a lot? Has it kept traces of its use? What wear and tear has marked the masonry?

Weather can erode stone and sand-laden desert winds can smoothen it. Even without insisting on these details, they can only help make a setting more alive. By studying the wear, the cracks and the paths formed by repeated passage, the observer can recreate the setting's history.

The ground can also prove to be important. An instable ground can have caused the floor to cave in and reveal tunnels. Some places, such as Cadwallon, were built on top of ancient ruins. The overlaying of constructions and the instability of the ground can cause interesting intermingling of architectural styles.

In these situations some flagstones can be cracked. There can be a difference in the level of the floor, even just a slight one, as well as paving stones that have come loose in the masonry.



TUTORIAL

The creation of circular flagstone flooring engraved with arabesques follows the same steps as those of the Scorpion laboratory or of the walls of the Barhan crypt (see *Cry Havoc* 1 and 2). The following principal steps can thus be defined: concept (sketch), casting/texturing, floating, engraving, finishing and painting.

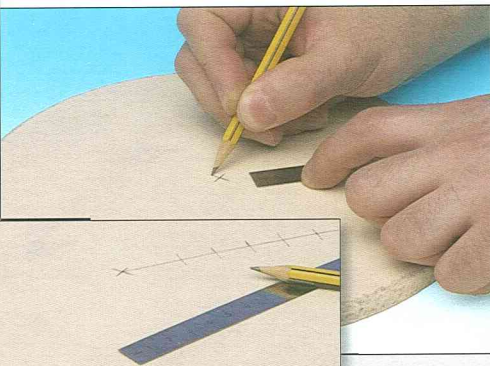
The first steps having been covered in the previous issues, this tutorial focuses on the engraving and painting of a flagstone flooring.

A plaster tablet of the desired diameter is cast and the various tools needed are gathered. The plaster is textured and made ready to be engraved.



All of the concentric circles are engraved into the plaster tablet, thus forming the first step of the flagstones' creation.

The next step is to form each individual flagstone that the circles are made of. It looks better to have the flagstones in adjacent circles not be lined up with each other. Indeed, having them overlap theoretically provides greater solidity.



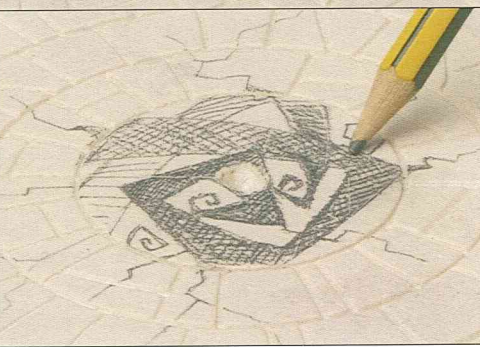
The guiding marks are drawn using a pencil directly on the plaster tablet. Its centre is determined and marks are made to define the sizes of the flagstone circles.



Using a compass with metal tips at each of its ends, concentric circles are engraved following the marks made in the previous step.



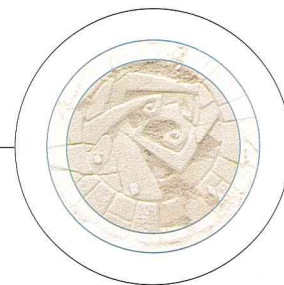
The arabesques at the centre are drawn with a pencil. They are a guide when sculpting the motif and help avoid awkward composition and design.



The arabesques are sculpted into the tablet in bas-reliefs. The drawing of the previous step wasn't respected in detail, for it was just a rough guiding sketch. Indeed, sculpting plaster requires one to be opportunistic and to take advantage of beautiful blemishes to get a coherent crack, a realistic impact or any other effect. Arabesques are created progressively by removing the plaster little by little.

The detailing, such as the creation of an area where the floor has caved in or the sculpting of cracks, is then done.

In this step natural elements, such as moss, grass or lichen that has grown between the flagstones, can be added. Most of the techniques and materials used to customise bases can also be used here, especially sand, cork and carpenter glue.

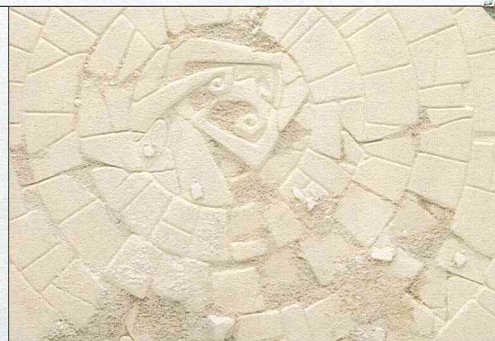
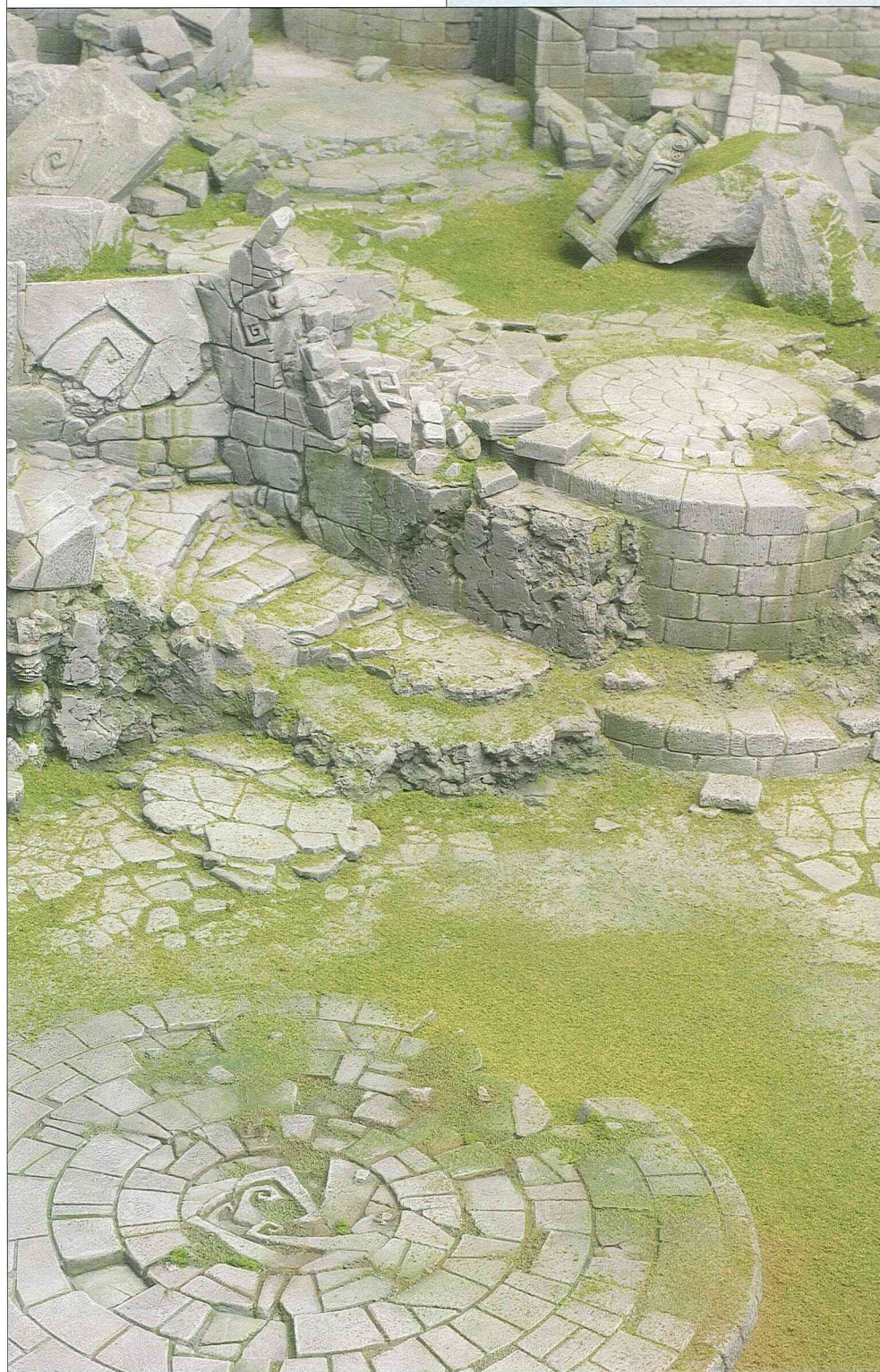


The setting is painted in the same spirit as a customised base. A base layer of neutral grey is applied followed by a black wash. Grey is then added again and made lighter using light grey. All colours used are similar to those applied to bases. The finishing touch can be given to the setting by adding some flaking or bristles of a paintbrush to simulate tall grass.

Like for customised bases, painting a setting in different ways can create different atmospheres. The type and quality of the stone can be made to vary through different colour schemes.

The techniques used to create a flagstone flooring can be applied to other structures such as walls, ceilings or any other structure made of stone. The creative process and the various steps remain largely identical.

The buildings of Aarklash await nothing more than your inspiration to come to life at your hands.



A FORCED PASSAGE

In this third issue of *Cry Havoc*, we present the account of a game of *HYBRID*.

The Trap is a mission published in the first issue of *Cry Havoc*. It allows the new tiles of the *NEMESIS* supplement to be used in order to build bigger and deadlier laboratories. Furthermore, the Scorpion player doesn't have to prepare a squad: the alchemical fiends appear round after round from a cloning chamber.

The **Griffins** must set the door that prevents them from leaving with explosives to blow it open so that two of them can flee before their enemies kill them all. The **Scorpions** must spread a deadly gas in the laboratories by activating **Objective I**. If they manage to do so, then the gas kills all the **Griffins** at the end of the round!

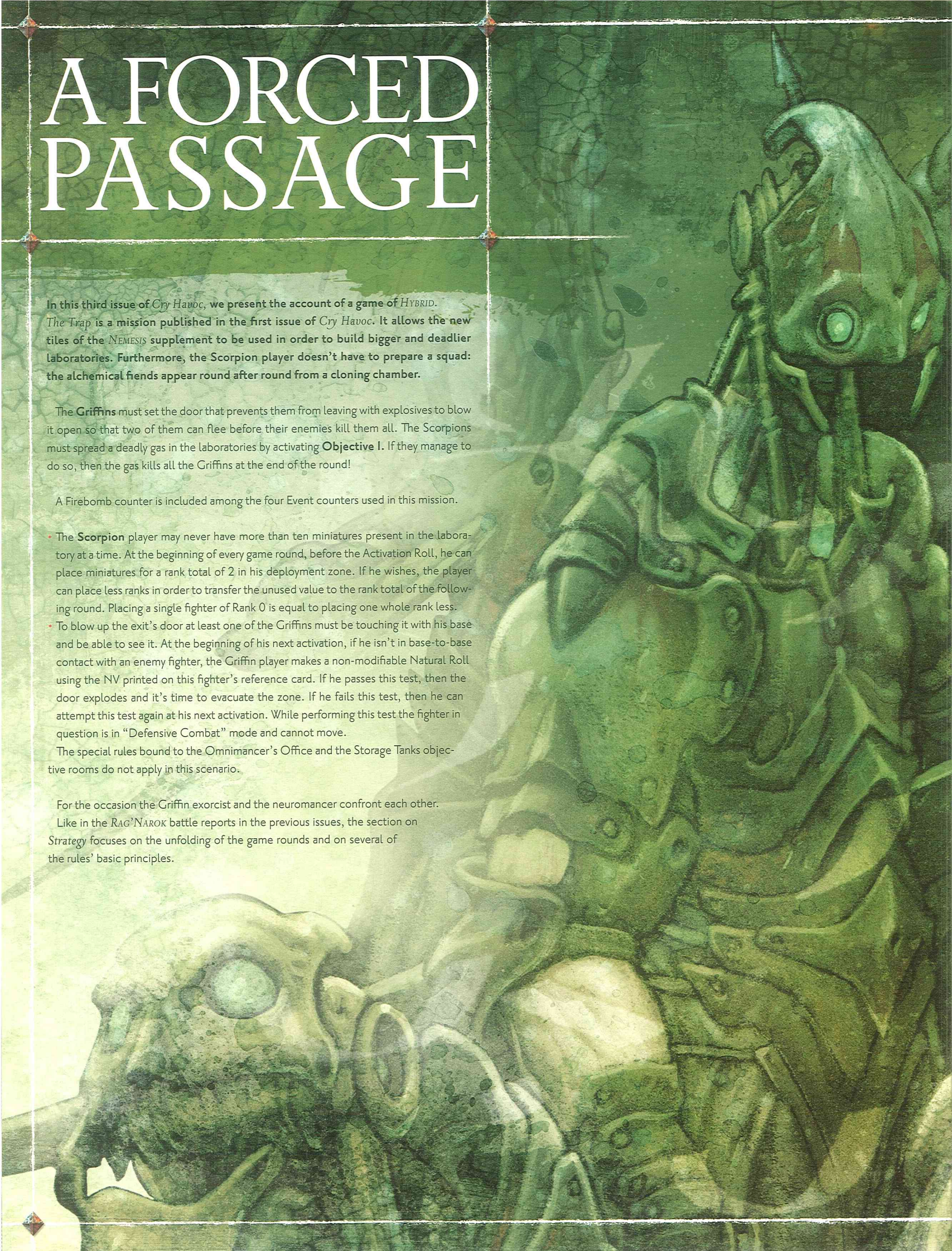
A Firebomb counter is included among the four Event counters used in this mission.

- The **Scorpion** player may never have more than ten miniatures present in the laboratory at a time. At the beginning of every game round, before the Activation Roll, he can place miniatures for a rank total of 2 in his deployment zone. If he wishes, the player can place less ranks in order to transfer the unused value to the rank total of the following round. Placing a single fighter of Rank 0 is equal to placing one whole rank less.
- To blow up the exit's door at least one of the **Griffins** must be touching it with his base and be able to see it. At the beginning of his next activation, if he isn't in base-to-base contact with an enemy fighter, the **Griffin** player makes a non-modifiable Natural Roll using the NV printed on this fighter's reference card. If he passes this test, then the door explodes and it's time to evacuate the zone. If he fails this test, then he can attempt this test again at his next activation. While performing this test the fighter in question is in "Defensive Combat" mode and cannot move.

The special rules bound to the Omnimancer's Office and the Storage Tanks objective rooms do not apply in this scenario.

For the occasion the **Griffin** exorcist and the neuromancer confront each other.

Like in the *RAG'NAROK* battle reports in the previous issues, the section on *Strategy* focuses on the unfolding of the game rounds and on several of the rules' basic principles.





STRATEGY A FORCED PASSAGE

SETTING UP THE GAME

USEFUL RULES

HYBRID is played using d10. All fighters have a **Natural Value (NV)**. To make a Natural Roll one must roll d10 with the hope of getting a result that is equal to or lower than a **Success Level (SL)** which is determined thanks to the NV.

$$SL = NV - 1 / \text{Wound (+ modifiers)}$$

These modifiers are provided by the fighters' equipment, by the circumstances and by Action cards.

A fighter has a choice of four action modes:



Each of these modes has six options: the **levels of mastery**. In addition a fighter can have aptitudes, the *HYBRID* equivalent of abilities in *CONFRONTATION*. A fighter with a level of "X" in a certain action mode can be used with this mode's levels of mastery 1 to X.

After having reread the mission's instructions, Arnaud and Sebastien decide who will play which camp: Arnaud will play the Lodge of Hod while Sebastien

progressively lets the Scorpions enter the game. So only Arnaud forms a squad for this mission.

Arnaud: "First of all I choose the seneschal because the success of my mission depends on my ability to quickly set a bomb. And this operation depends on the NV printed on the reference card of the fighters performing this task. The seneschal (NV: 4) is the right man for the job. I then choose Venerable Ambrosius for his auras, and the Griffin exorcist for his power that lets him cancel out his enemies' aptitudes! I complete my squad with the indispensable purifiers of the Lodge of Hod."

Sebastien and Arnaud then prepare the cards that are used in a game of *HYBRID* and start by making the deck of Event cards. Then they take care of the decks reserved to each of their camps – those of Event/Army cards. They each draw two cards without looking at them. And finally they select two Equipment cards – Aura (Griffin) or Mutation (Scorpion) – among three that are drawn at random.

These last cards are drawn from different packs of cards, which are then put away. (Only the selected cards are played in the game.)

Arnaud: "I have the choice between Aura of Appeasement, Aura of Blessing and Aura of Injunction. I decide to discard the last one. Aura of Appeasement will let me withstand the Scorpions and Aura of Blessing will make my Skilled Firing easier."

Sebastien: "I drew the Endorphin Injector, the Blood of Darkness and Muscular Hypertrophy. I

choose the first one for its offensive power and the second one to allow me to keep a crucial fighter alive for this mission."

GRIFFIN SQUAD

RANK TOTAL: 7 NUMBER OF FIGHTERS: 5

FIGHTER	NV	RANK
SENECHAL	4	2
VENERABLE AMBROSIOUS ^(*)	3	2
GRIFFIN EXORCIST	3	1
PURIFIER 1	3	1
PURIFIER 2	3	1

^(*) Squad leader. This information is important when playing certain aptitudes, such as Conviction/X.

Sebastien and Arnaud then draw their four Action cards and leave those remaining in this second deck. They will use it every time one of their fighters is killed. However, the sacrifice of a miniature (when this is an option bound to an aptitude) does not allow an Action card to be drawn.

Once the game board has been set up, Arnaud deploys the Griffins.



Arnaud: "My plan is simple. The seneschal, Venerable Ambrosius and a purifier will rush towards the door in order to fulfil their mission. To prevent Sebastian from doing the same I'm leaving a purifier and the Griffin exorcist as a rear-guard. I don't like the idea of splitting my squad in two (due to their range, Ambrosius's auras and the 'Conviction' aptitude are only efficient if my squad remains grouped together), but I don't want to leave my opponent an opening. So I deploy my troops with this strategy in mind."

X

ACTION CARDS

On every Action card there is a number between 0 and 4 (Action points) and a short text (Action effect).

Each card can be played in one way or another. At the moment that it is used the player chooses if he's using the card's Action points or Action effect.

Once it has been played, the Action card is discarded. Any unused effect or points are lost.

THE GRIFFIN EXORCIST

Twice during a game the Griffin exorcist can attempt to carry out an additional attack against an opponent he has just wounded. This requires a Natural Roll with an SL of 7 to be made. If this test is successfully passed, then the Griffin exorcist manages to inflict his opponent with one additional wound.

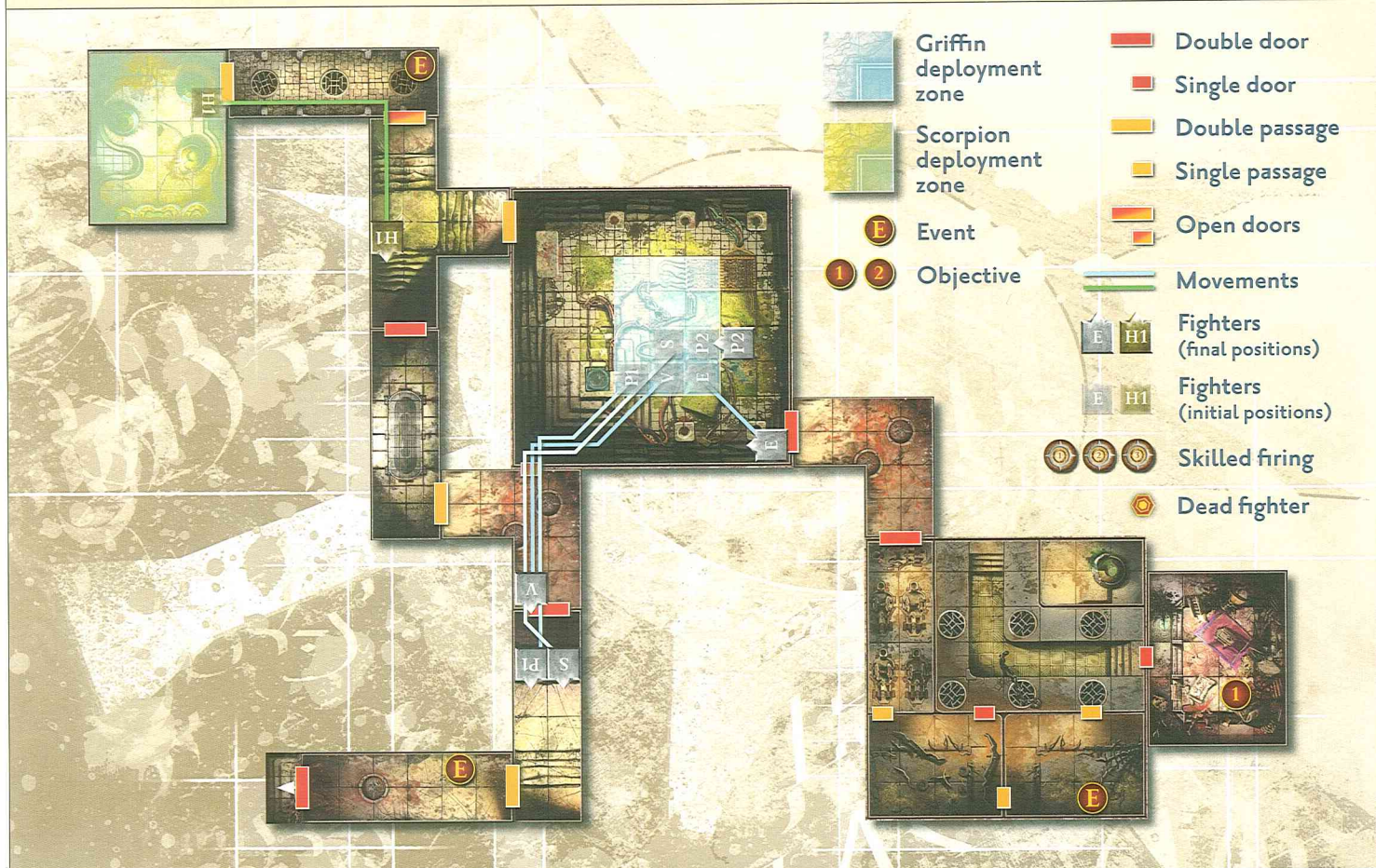
At the beginning of every game round the Griffin exorcist can attempt to neutralise one aptitude of an opponent who is within less than 8 squares of him. This requires a Natural Roll with an SL of 7 to be made. If successful, then the targeted fighter can no longer use the chosen aptitude until the end of the round. This ability can only be used on fighters within the Griffin exorcist's line of sight standing less than 8 squares from him.



The indispensable purifier
of the Lodge of Hod.

STRATEGY A FORCED PASSAGE

ROUND 1



At the beginning of the round Sebastien chooses to deploy only a total of one rank: a hybrid. The Griffin exorcist cannot use his power in this round.

Sebastien: "I insist on deploying a fighter of rank 3 as soon as possible. I therefore have to save a rank for the second round. I chose the hybrid for his versatility and his ability to benefit from Mutation cards."

Every round of *HYBRID* starts with the roll of *Id10*: the **Activation Roll**. The player who gets the lowest result is the randomly chosen winner. So he decides if he will play first or if he will leave this privilege to his opponent. As of the second round, the Activation Roll's result can be modified by an Action card (only one per player) that is placed face down before the roll is made.

Arnaud and Sebastien each roll *Id10*. Sebastien gets the lower result and thus wins this roll.

Instead of playing first, Sebastien gives Arnaud the lead.

They then determine double-blindly (meaning that each player is unaware of his opponent's choices) the order in which their fighters will act. To do so, the numbered counters are placed face down on the fighters' bases. The players then take turns revealing them. In the present case Arnaud reveals one of his

ACTIVATION SEQUENCE: ROUND 1


FIGHTER	MODE (LEVEL OF MASTERY)	CURRENT NV
1 PURIFIER 2	(3)	3
1 HYBRID	(1)	3
2 PURIFIER 1	(1)	3
3 SENESCHAL	(1)	4
4 VENERABLE AMBROSIIUS	(1)	3
5 GRIFFIN EXORCIST		3



activation counters first. Then it is Sebastian's turn, then Arnaud's again, and so on.

Arnaud: "I establish my activation sequence according to my gaming habits and my objective: I start with the fighters to be placed into 'Skilled Firing' mode, then come those who must set the explosives to blast open the door, and then those who don't risk much, meaning the Griffin exorcist."

Sebastien: "With only one fighter to place, my activation sequence is quickly decided on!"

 Arnaud activates his second purifier and right away he announces which mode he selects for this fighter as is specified by the rules. (The miniature is moved, be it in "Moving" mode or not). He announces the "Firing" mode and moves the purifier in such a way as to activate the Event counter. Arnaud then draws an Event card (The Furnace) without showing it to Sebastien.

THE FURNACE


This card is played when an enemy warrior is activated and before his action mode is chosen. As a result, the target cannot move or choose the "Moving" mode until the end of the round. The Furnace card can also be used to cancel the effects of the "Wandering Spirit" Event as soon as your opponent plays it. This card is discarded as soon as it is played.

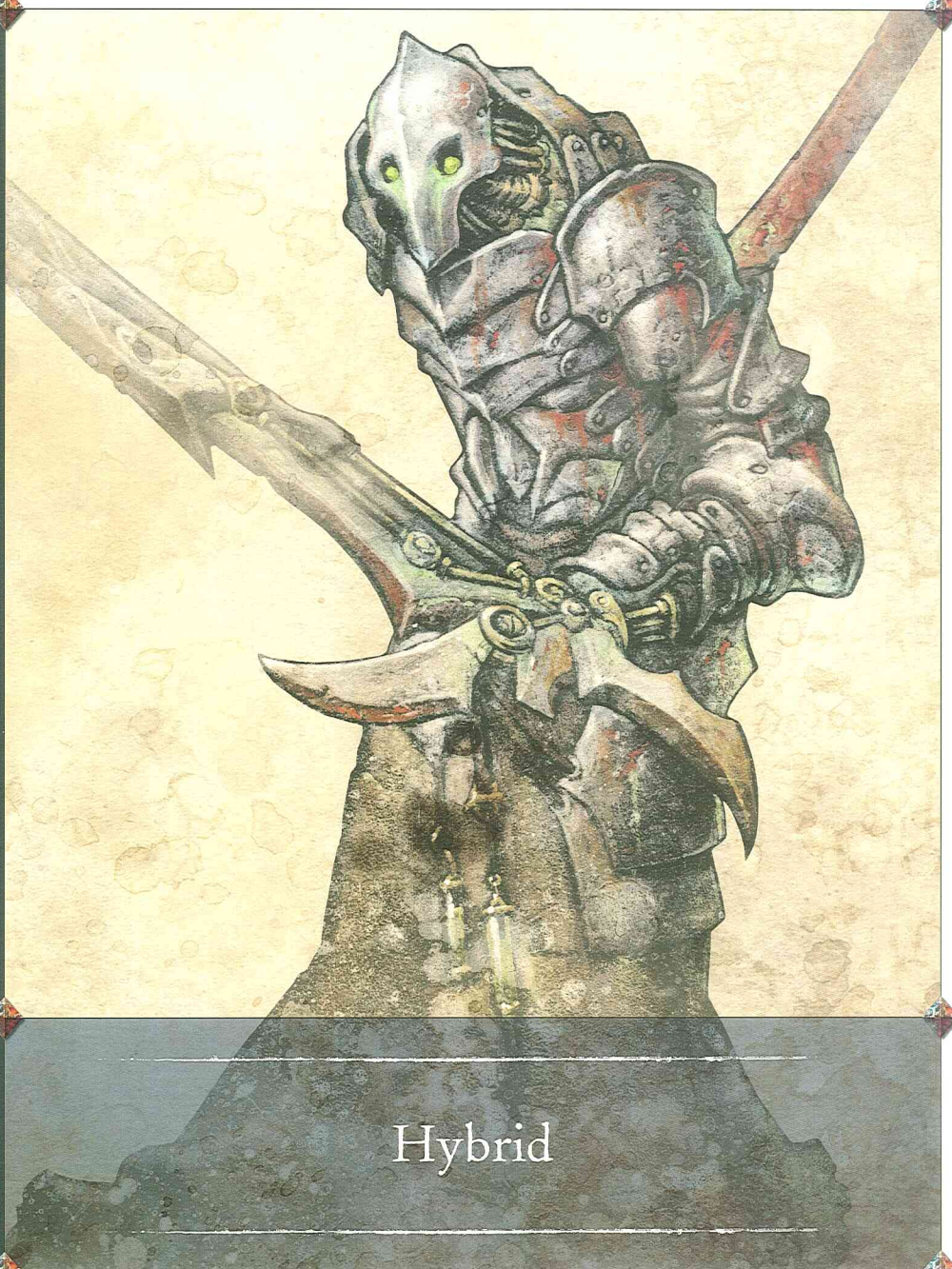
The next Event counter activation can only be carried out by Sebastien. Indeed, these counters alternately serve the players' interests. It sometimes happens that they hide unpleasant surprises: traps.

Arnaud then specifies that his purifier will use Skilled Firing.

Arnaud: "I really wanted to be the first to activate an Event counter. I think that it won't be long before Sebastien takes care of the one located near his deployment zone. If he does so, then I'll be able to activate the last one near the exit."

The Furnace is a good draw. Movement is of primordial importance in this mission and this card will allow me to block an enemy fighter at the right moment."

 Sebastien moves his only fighter.



Hybrid

For the rest of the round only Arnaud still has fighters left to activate. He follows his activation sequence and uses the "Moving" mode to advance quickly. Indeed, this mode allows doors to be opened for free (instead of costing 1 Movement point as in the other modes). When Arnaud activates Venerable Ambrosius, he must specify how the latter uses his "Aura / 2" aptitude. Arnaud chooses the Aura of Blessing, but he can change it every time Venerable Ambrosius is activated or even decide not to use an Aura card at all.

Arnaud: "I'm resisting the temptation to attack the isolated hybrid. One must learn to stick to one's plan. I place the Griffin exorcist with his back to the door, for this is the only way to prevent an enemy fighter from passing. Furthermore, this protects the exorcist from being attacked from behind."

ΔURA/X

Warriors endowed with this aptitude can accomplish supernatural feats. Δn aura is effective over X squares surrounding the warrior (this doesn't take into account the square the warrior is standing on) and affects all warriors present in this zone. Δuras are unaffected by obstacles such as walls or doors. Δ warrior cannot benefit from the effects of his own aura but he can be influenced by the auras of other warriors. Furthermore, a warrior can use only one aura at a time.

The use, the cancellation or the modification of an aura is announced when a warrior is activated during the activation sequence. The effects of the relevant aura are applicable immediately.

STRATEGY A FORCED PASSAGE

ROUND 2



At the beginning of the round Sebastien decides to deploy a Keratis warrior and a neuromancer. The Griffin exorcist still cannot use his power.

Sebastien: "I underestimated Arnaud's capacity to take control of the corridor leading to the exit. I should have studied the game tiles more carefully when choosing my fighter. I'm going to change my plan before it's too late. Goodbye the Nemesis clone, the Aberration and the Dasyatis clone. I need more fighters."

THE RED DRAGON'S OPINION

One should always put oneself into one's opponent's place in order to anticipate his miniatures' movements and thus the tactical configurations to come. HYBRID is indeed a game of position.



Though it is possible, neither Arnaud nor Sebastien play Action cards in order to modify the Activation Roll. Once again the dice favour Sebastien who gets the lead.


ACTIVATION SEQUENCE: ROUND 2

FIGHTER	MODE (LEVEL OF MASTERY)	CURRENT nv
1 HYBRID	(1)	3
2 SENESCHAL	(1)	4
3 KERATIS WARRIOR	(1)	3
4 PURIFIER 1	(3)	3
5 NEUROMANCER	(1)	3
6 VENERABLE AMBROSIOUS	(1)	3
7 PURIFIER 2	(1)	3
8 GRIFFIN EXORCIST		3

Arnaud: "I have chosen the same activation order for my fighters as in the previous round. With hindsight

I realise that I got carried away with the seneschal. I should have placed the purifier first."

Sebastien: "I'm activating my hybrid first because he risks not surviving Arnaud's first activation."

 Sebastien activates his hybrid and announces the "Firing" mode for him. He moves him and the clone enters the second purifier's field of vision. For the first time a fighter is within one of his opponent's lines of sight: this is known as **first contact**. So the two players each draw their Event/Army card. Arnaud gets The Vengeful Hand of Merin and Sebastien gets The Predator's Instinct. Arnaud immediately announces the use of Skilled Firing and decides to play an Action card (SL + 1).

Arnaud: "Bang!"

Sebastien: Tense smile.

Sebastien decides to hinder his opponent's actions. He therefore plays an Action card, the only one he is allowed to play available. This reaction by the opponent is called a **hindrance**. Indeed, only the player who initiates an action can play several cards, one before and several after his opponent. Rather than benefiting from the action points, Sebastien decides to use the effect printed on the card: Arnaud is forced to show his hand.

CONVICTION/X

A fighter with Conviction/X must be within eight squares or less of his squad leader. For as long as he remains within this area of effect, the fighter benefits from an X-point bonus on the SL of his Offensive Combat and Defensive Combat Rolls.

If the squad leader is eliminated, then all Conviction effects immediately end. (Only fighters with the "Aura/X" aptitude can be squad leaders.)

The purifier benefits from the SL + 1 provided by the Action card used by Arnaud, but not from the Conviction/I bonus because this aptitude does not affect Firing. Arnaud gets a "1" on the die: a Perfect Success! The hybrid therefore suffers two Wounds (instead of only one if it had been a "normal" Success), which immediately reduces his Movement by 2 points and forces him to come to a halt earlier.


Sebastien: "That's not fair!"


Arnaud: "True... but life isn't fair."


Yet the hybrid is not eliminated. The purifier loses the advantage of Skilled Firing and the clone ends his movement without problems. Sebastien then chooses the victim of his hybrid's shot. Venerable Ambrosius would be a strategic target, but he is out of range. So



purifier 2 is selected. Sebastien doesn't play an Action card, but Arnaud decides to hinder his opponent with an effect identical to the one that Sebastien has just played. Being wounded, the hybrid misses his target.

 Arnaud activates the seneschal, who manages to reach the exit door. In accordance with the mission's objective, if he is not in base-to-base contact with an enemy fighter during his next activation he will be able to begin setting the explosives on the door.

 and the three following ones. Sebastien activates his Keratis warrior and Arnaud activates his first purifier to place him into Skilled Firing. The neuromancer is used with his "Preservation" power. The hybrid is in bad shape! (The Natural Roll is successful.) Arnaud activates Venerable Ambrosius.

 The second purifier is activated. Arnaud announces the "Firing" mode for him and moves his miniature. Then he announces that the shot's target is the hybrid. No Action card is played and Arnaud again gets a Perfect Success: an additional Wound is inflicted, meaning a total of two Wounds!

Sebastien: "I decide not to play a hindrance to the purifier's Basic Firing because I'm counting on the neuromancer's Preservation. This aptitude should help me get out of this bad phase."

Sebastien rolls the die twice for Preservation. He fails both of them. Riddled with bullets, the hybrid collapses. Sebastien must draw an Action card owing to this death, which he does. Furthermore, the hybrid is the first fighter to be killed in this game: this is known as **first blood**. The two players therefore draw their second Event/Army cards. Arnaud gets Point Blank and Sebastien gets The Clones' Fury.

The rest of the round goes smoothly.



NEUROMANCER

When the neuromancer is activated he can call on his psychic powers. Ta da sa, a Natural Roll must be successfully made with an SL +3. If the roll fails, no psychic powers can be used. Furthermore, the neuromancer then remains in "Defensive Combat" made until the end of the round. If the roll succeeds, then one of the psychic powers described below can be used only once in this round. The range of these powers is of 4 squares. The neuromancer cannot use a psychic power on himself. A fighter can be affected by only one of these powers per round.

Preservation: This psychic power can be used as soon as a friendly fighter within the power's range is Wounded. Roll 1d10. On a result of "5" or less the fighter ignores this Wound.

Intimidation: This psychic power can only be used on an enemy fighter who hasn't been activated yet. The target then makes a Natural Roll with an SL +2. If it fails, then the victim cannot use the "Defensive Combat" made until the end of the round.

Rage: This psychic power can only be used on a fighter who hasn't been activated yet. A Perfect Success is obtained on a "1" or a "2" in Offensive Combat until the end of the round. This effect cannot be cumulated with the "Duellist" aptitude.



INFILTRATION/X

At the end of each round a warrior endowed with this aptitude can move X additional squares. This warrior is considered to be in the same mode he was in when he was activated. (In "Moving" mode he can open doors without suffering a penalty on his infiltration movement.) This aptitude's advantage is lost for the rest of the game as soon as an enemy fighter has a line of sight onto this warrior.

At the beginning of the round Sebastien uses the two ranks he has available to deploy a tiger of Dirz. The Griffin exorcist still doesn't have a target within range.

No Action cards are used. Arnaud wins the Activation Roll and gets the lead.

No combat takes place during this activation sequence, which is nevertheless important for the game. Indeed, it is during this round that the fighters are truly placed. Except for the second purifier, all Griffins are now more or less located where they will end this mission. Furthermore, during its movement the tiger of Dirz doesn't move into any Griffin fighter's field of vision. The tiger can therefore use its "Infiltration/2" aptitude at the end of the round! (See box above.)

Arnaud rolls the die for his seneschal to set the explosives on the exit door. With a result of "9" he fails. The tension is at its peak.

At the end of the round Sebastien uses the tiger of Dirz's "Infiltration/2" aptitude: the miniature is moved by two squares.

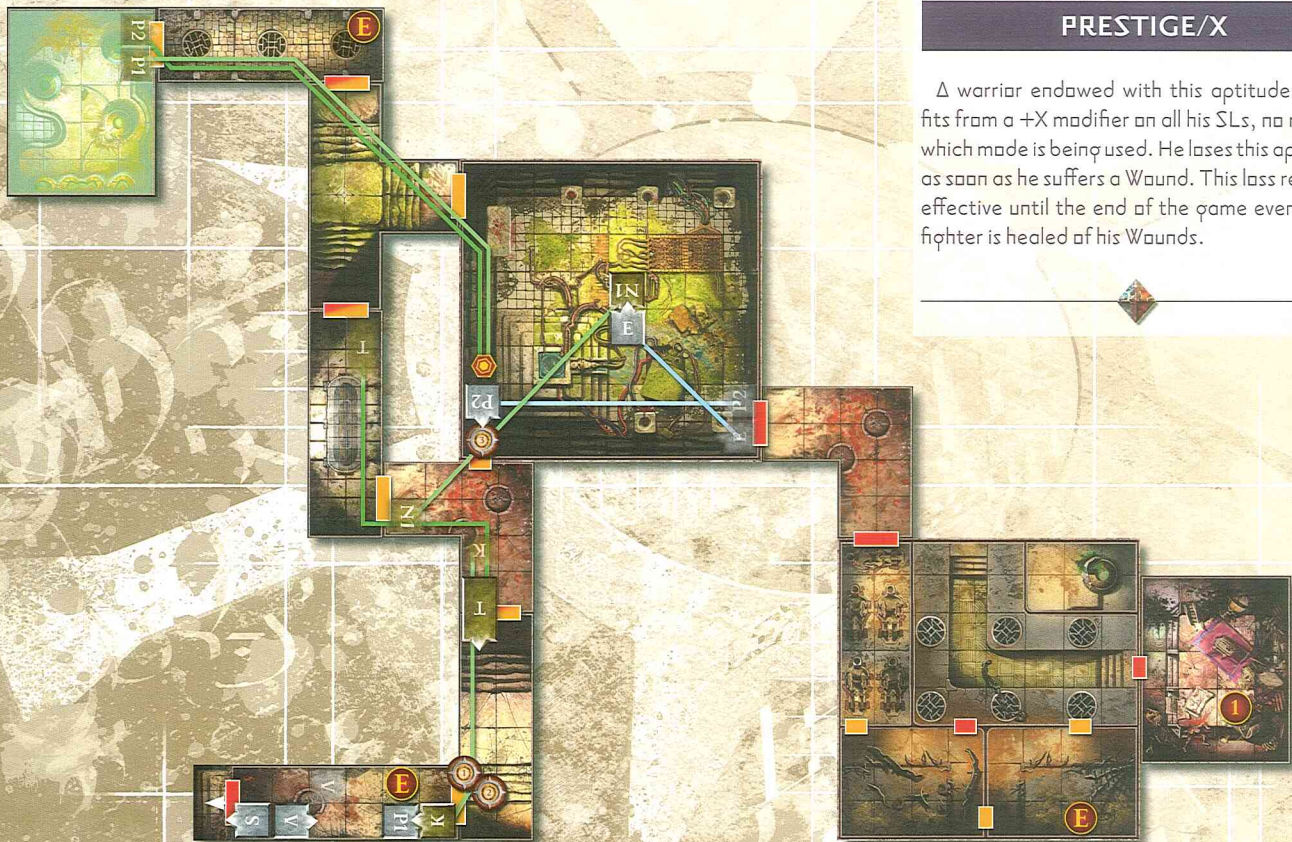
Arnaud: "I feared that combat would break out earlier. That's why I activated the Griffins in the corridor first, starting with those who would be placed in

Skilled Firing, the Akkylannians' defensive tactic par excellence."

ACTIVATION SEQUENCE: ROUND 3

FIGHTER	MODE (LEVEL OF MASTERY)	CURRENT NV
PURIFIER 1	(3)	3
TIGER OF DIRZ	(1)	3
VENERABLE AMBROSIVS	(3)	3
KERATIS WARRIOR	(1)	3
SENESCHAL		4
NEUROMANCER	(1)	3
PURIFIER 2	(3)	3
GRIFFIN EXORCIST		3

ROUND 4



PRESTIGE/X

A warrior endowed with this aptitude benefits from a +X modifier on all his SLs, no matter which mode is being used. He loses this aptitude as soon as he suffers a Wound. This loss remains effective until the end of the game even if the fighter is healed of his Wounds.

At the beginning of the round Sebastien uses one of his two ranks to deploy two pests of flesh. Arnaud hopes to use the exorcist's power to cancel out the Keratis warrior's "Mutation/I" aptitude. Though the latter is within the Griffin's range (eight squares), he isn't in his field of vision and therefore cannot be targeted.

No Action cards are played. Sebastien wins the Activation Roll.

Arnaud: "I stick to the same. The fighters near the exit will be activated first, with one exception. All clones are advancing towards the door and I can't resist the temptation of sending reinforcements in this direction. So my second purifier takes the place of his counterpart in my activation sequence."

Sebastien: "For this round I decide to activate my fighters by starting with those nearest to the exit. Thus, I increase my chances of attacking Arnaud's miniatures before they can reorganise themselves."

Sebastien activates his Keratis warrior first and plays the "Predator's Instinct" Event on him. He then moves him in the first purifier's direction after having announced "Offensive Combat" mode.

ACTIVATION SEQUENCE: ROUND 4

FIGHTER	MODE (LEVEL OF MASTERY)	CURRENT NV
 KERATIS WARRIOR	 (3)	3
 SENESCHAL		4
 NEUROMANCER	 (1)	3
 VENERABLE AMBROSIOUS	 (1)	3
 TIGER OF DIRZ	 (1)	3
 PURIFIER 2	 (1)	3
 PEST OF FLESH 1	 (1)	1
 GRIFFIN EXORCIST	 (4)	3
 PEST OF FLESH 2	 (1)	1

At the sixth square of his movement the Keratis warrior is targeted by the Lodge of Hod's Skilled Firing (first by the purifier, then Venerable Ambrosius). The bonuses provided by his consecrated pistols (SL + 2) and by the Aura of Blessing (SL + 2) are added to the purifier's NV (3) to give a total SL of 7. Arnaud doesn't play any Action cards, but Sebastien announces a hindrance by using one of his cards' effects. Arnaud must discard all his Action cards. However, the purifier hits his target and inflicts the Keratis warrior with a Wound. Venerable Ambrosius does the same.


Arnaud: "How stupid of me! I had seen that 'discarding' Action card. I should have used mine without holding back, especially for the Activation Rolls that I keep failing..."


The Keratis warrior loses two NV points, and therefore of Movement, but is not eliminated. The purifier and Venerable Ambrosius can no longer use Skilled Firing as long as this level of mastery is not assigned to them again. Thanks to the Predator's Instinct bonus (Mt +2) the Keratis warrior (NV: 1) can nevertheless manage to reach the purifier... who's in Offensive Combat!

No Action cards are played and Sebastien chooses the "Skilled Strike" level of mastery. The Keratis warrior benefits from his ripper volve's bonus (SL +2) and from that of the Predator's Instinct (SL +3) to give him an SL of 6.

Sebastien gets a "1": a Perfect Success! He rolls again for the Skilled Strike (which allows a second attack if the first one is successful) and gets another Success. In all, his fighter inflicts the purifier with three Wounds, which is enough to send him straight to Merin.


Arnaud draws an Action card (SL +1) and Sebastien can activate the Keratis warrior's "Frenzy/1" aptitude. The latter now benefits from a +1 on all his Natural Rolls in Offensive as well as Defensive Combat.

 Arnaud activates the seneschal who is trying to set the bomb on the door. He gets a "7" and fails.


 Sebastien activates his neuromancer and chooses the "Rage" power. (He succeeds the Natural Roll.) During his movement this fighter is targeted by the second purifier (who was placed in Skilled Firing). Sebastien hinders him (SL -1) and thanks to this the Firing Roll fails! An Action card has once again made the difference. The purifier therefore loses his Skilled Firing. The neuromancer strikes back after finishing his movement. Even with Prestige/1 he still misses his target.


Sebastien: "I played my neuromancer badly. I should have activated him first and used Preservation to protect my Keratis warrior. Tough luck."





 Arnaud activates Ambrosius in "Firing" mode. After having moved, this fighter targets the Keratis warrior. Arnaud plays an Action card (SL +1), but Sebastien hinders him by the same amount (SL -1). Arnaud has no more Action cards and therefore can no longer play one to weaken Sebastien's hindrance. Venerable Ambrosius misses his target.


Sebastien: "I played the card not for the penalty it causes on the Natural Roll but for the reduction in the mode's value. With a 5 in Firing, Venerable Ambrosius represented a great danger."

 Sebastien activates his tiger of Dirz and moves it while remaining out of the Griffins' fields of vision.

 Arnaud activates his now only purifier and announces a shot. He moves his fighter so that he can see the tiger of Dirz, thus cancelling the "Infiltration/2" aptitude for the rest of the game. The purifier then targets the wild cat. No Action cards are played. Arnaud announces Basic Firing. The purifier suffers a -1 penalty caused by the tiger of Dirz's "Velocity/X" aptitude. Furthermore, he does not get any bonus due to the size of his target's base. (The tiger is not a Titan and the rules specify that only bases that cover two by two squares are of Large Size.) The purifier misses the tiger of Dirz.

 Sebastien activates his first pest of flesh and sends it to sacrifice itself while touching the purifier, thus inflicting the latter with one Wound. The clone dies, but as is specified in the rules of the "Sacrifice/X" aptitude, Sebastien does not draw an Action card.

 Owing to the first purifier's death, the Griffin exorcist, who is normally fifth in the activation sequence, becomes fourth and is activated. Arnaud announces Offensive Combat and sends his fighter into base-to-base contact with the neuromancer. No Action cards are played and Arnaud selects Expert Strike. Yet the exorcist fails.

 Sebastien activates his second pest of flesh and sends it in self-sacrifice towards the purifier.

Sebastien: "I have now decided to be more aggressive. I am aware that the Event counter near my deployment zone is a sham: activating it would force me to delay one of my fighters by one round. In this mission this would be unacceptable!"

VELOCITY/X

Creatures endowed with the "Velocity" aptitude move in an agile, flowing manner. Any warriors attempting to fire at such creatures incur negative modifiers equal to X on their SL.

Velocity/X also gives the faculty to walk over trapdoors without suffering Wounds. The fighter simply considers the trapdoor to be a normal square, but in no way can he end his movement on it. Should he step on it involuntarily or due to a projection (caused, for example, by an enemy fighter's "Brutish Strength" aptitude), then the fighter suffers the trapdoor's negative effects.

ROUND 5



At the beginning of the round Sebastien uses his three ranks to deploy an aberration. Arnaud can finally use his Griffin exorcist's power and targets the neuromancer's "Mutation/I" aptitude. With a result of "2" he manages to cancel it for this round. Furthermore, Arnaud plays the "Vengeful Hand of Merin" Event. Except for the purifier, all his fighters are unharmed and now benefit from an SL +I on all their Natural Rolls.

Sebastien: "I'm furious! I had planned to have the neuromancer 'mutate' in order to slay the Griffin exorcist."


No Action cards are played for the Activation Roll. Arnaud gets the lead.

Arnaud: "It is primordial to activate the seneschal first. I fear that he'll be engaged at contact. I'm placing Venerable Ambrosius in second position because I'm counting on him to eliminate the Keratis warrior in this round."

Sebastien: "I'm placing the Keratis warrior and the neuromancer at the beginning of my activation sequence since they are in contact with the enemy... or almost. What more, the result of their actions is of strategic importance in this round."

ACTIVATION SEQUENCE: ROUND 5

FIGHTER	MODE (LEVEL OF MASTERY)	CURRENT NV
 SENESCHAL		4
 KERATIS WARRIOR		1
 VENERABLE AMBROSIOUS	 (5)	3
 NEUROMANCER	 (4)	3
 PURIFIER 2	 (1)	1
 TIGER OF DIRZ	 (5)	3
 GRIFFIN EXORCIST	 (3)	3
 ABERRATION	 (1)	5

 Arnaud activates the seneschal and attempts to set the explosives on the door. He gets a result of "8" and thus fails once again.

Arnaud: "I didn't think that it would take so long. So I quietly decide to bring my last purifier back to the corridor in reinforcement. The Griffin exorcist can be sent to his death."

1 Sebastien activates his Keratis warrior. Arnaud plays the "Furnace" card on the latter. So Sebastien declares Defensive Combat for this clone. The Predator's Instinct is therefore discarded.

2 Arnaud activates Venerable Ambrosius and plays the "Point Blank" Event while announcing a shot. No Action cards are played. Arnaud takes full advantage of the Event by choosing Master Firing: he will therefore roll 2d10 instead of one. Thanks to the Vengeful Hand of Merin, Venerable Ambrosius has an SL of 6. Arnaud gets an "8" and a "10." In despair he uses the Vengeful Hand of Merin's second effect to re-roll the critical failure... and gets a "9."

Arnaud: "Holy moley! Not only am I unlucky, but I also should have benefited from the Furnace to quietly wait one round, and only used Basic Firing while keeping Point Blank in reserve for the next round."

3 Sebastien activates the neuromancer and chooses the "Intimidation" power with the Griffin exorcist as its target. He succeeds the neuromancer's Natural Roll. Arnaud gets a "10" on the die

and uses the Vengeful Hand of Merin again to re-roll and get a "3." The Griffin exorcist is therefore not intimidated and Sebastien declares Offensive Combat against him. No Action cards are played and the neuromancer carries out an Expert Strike. Thanks to Prestige/I he inflicts his opponent with one Wound.

4 Arnaud activates his purifier and declares Offensive Combat. He brings his fighter into contact with the tiger of Dirz. No Action cards are played and the purifier carries out a Basic Strike. The Griffin has only 1 in NV left but benefits from numerous bonuses (SL +I for the sword of the law, SL +I for Conviction and SL +I for the attack from behind!), which nevertheless don't provide him with a success.

Arnaud: "Offensive Combat was still the best choice: thus I avoided the Velocity penalty and I profited from Conviction and the bonus given by attack from behind."

5 Sebastien activates the tiger of Dirz and declares Offensive Combat. He moves this creature into contact with the seneschal and targets him. No Action cards are played and Sebastien

chooses a Master Strike: the seneschal is inflicted with a Wound.

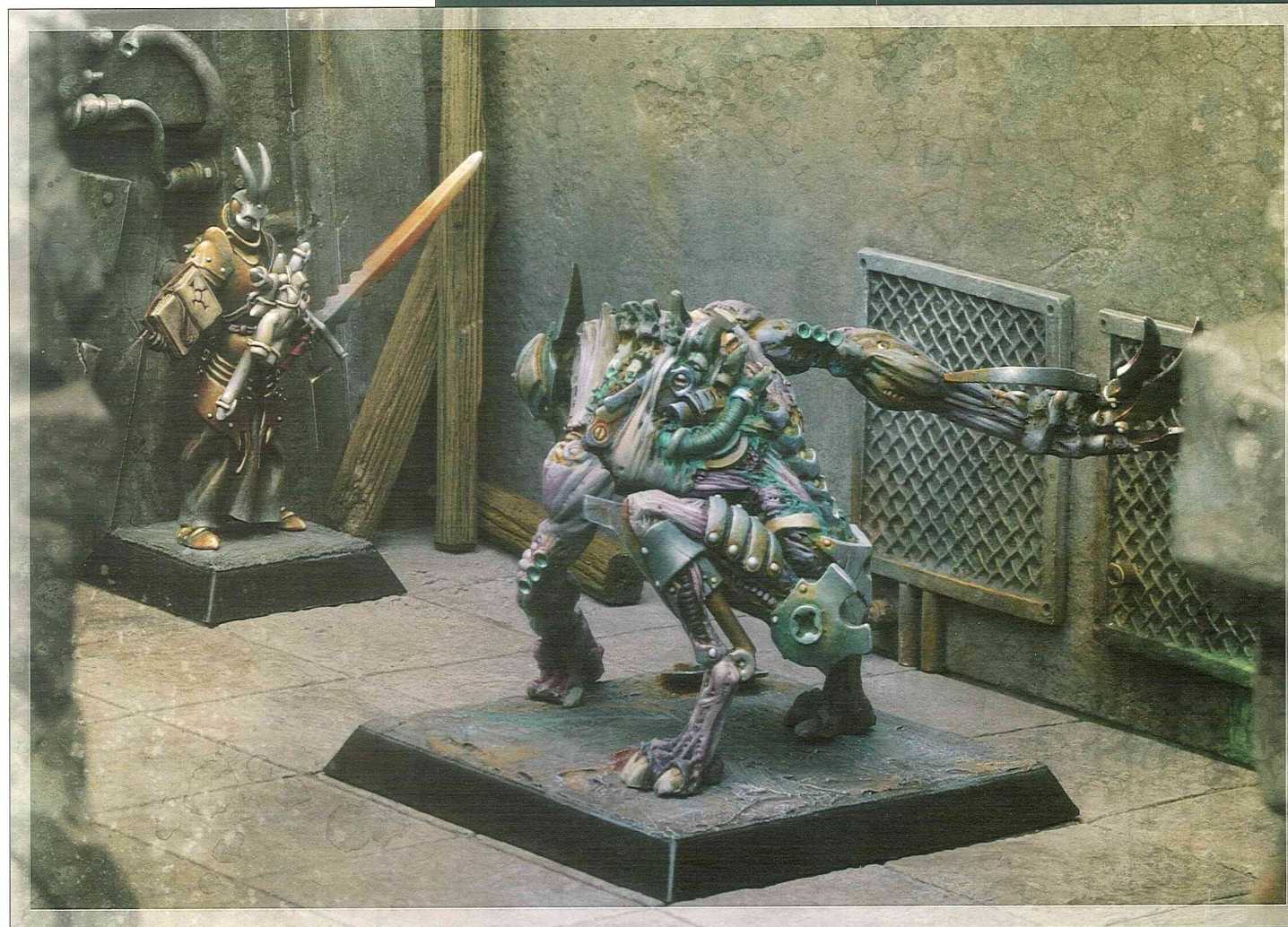
Arnaud: "Argh! With only one Movement point less, the tiger of Dirz wouldn't have been able to engage my seneschal. It would then have been enough to inflict the tiger with just one Wound..."

Sebastien: "As you said: 'It's not fair, but life's not fair!'"

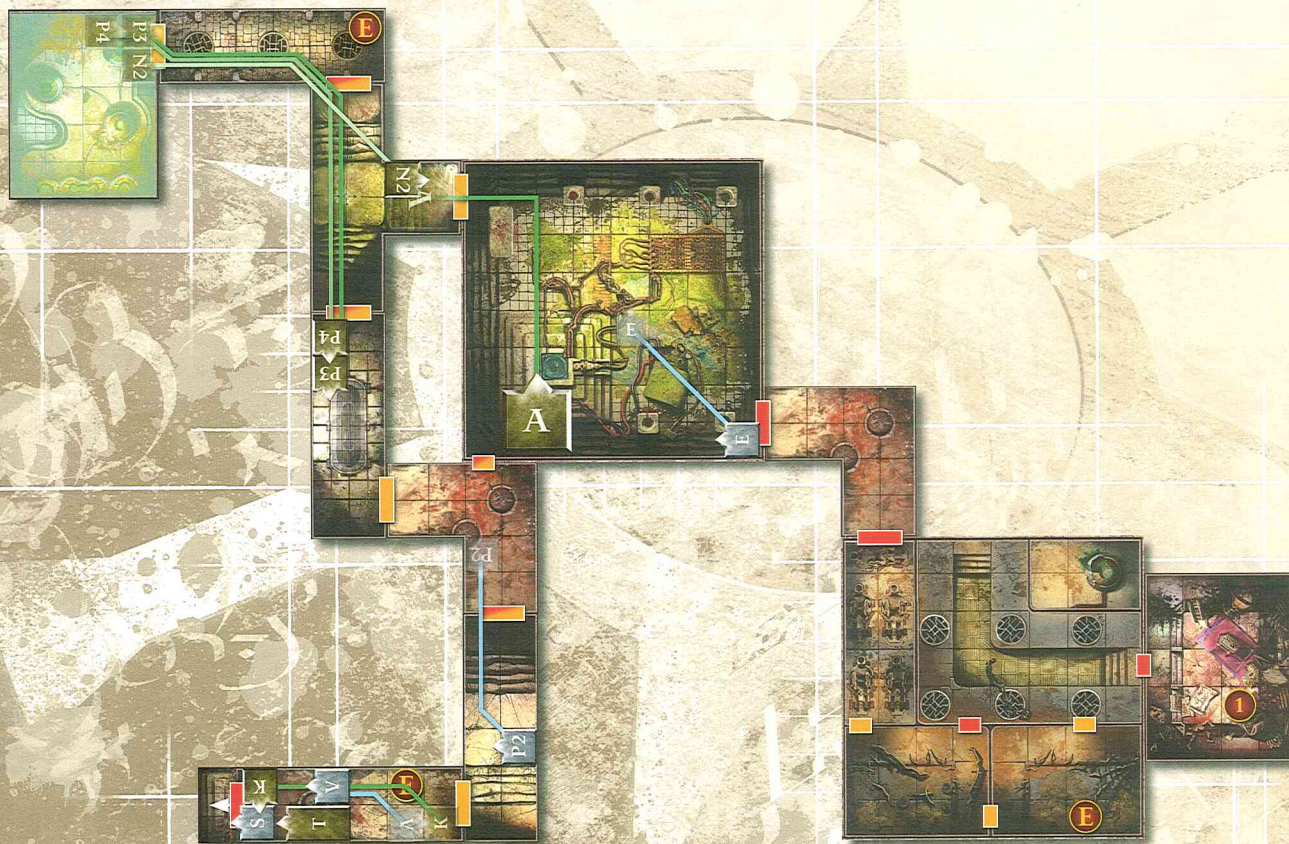
6 Arnaud activates the Griffin exorcist and declares Offensive Combat. He directly attacks the neuromancer. No Action cards are played and Arnaud chooses a Skilled Strike. With an SL of 4 he manages to get two consecutive successes and activates the exorcist's power to carry out a third attack (SL: 7), which finishes off the neuromancer. Sebastien draws an Action card.

Arnaud: "I risked all I had and it worked. Merin is back!"

7 Sebastien activates and moves the aberration.



ROUND 6



At the beginning of the round Sebastien uses his two ranks to deploy a neuromancer and two pests of flesh. Arnaud uses the Griffin exorcist's power to cancel out the aberration's "Brutish Strength" aptitude. He gets a "4" on the die: the clone therefore loses this aptitude for this round.

Sebastien again gets the lower result on the Activation Roll and gets the lead.

Sebastien: "I didn't use an Action card because Arnaud doesn't have any left in his hand. I prefer keeping mine in order to modify mode values."

Arnaud: "There's no use in activating the seneschal first; he can no longer set the door with explosives. I therefore choose Venerable Ambrosius because I am counting on him to finish off the dying Keratis warrior. I could then unleash the seneschal's offensive power against the tiger and get rid of all the clones located on this tile."

Sebastien: "Evidently the game is being played near the exit, and that's where my first activations will take place. I choose the Keratis warrior first since he is near the gates of death."

ACTIVATION SEQUENCE: ROUND 6

FIGHTER	MODE (LEVEL OF MASTERY)	CURRENT nv
 KERATIS WARRIOR	 (6)	1
 VENERABLE AMBROSIOUS	 (2)	3
 TIGER OF DIRZ	 (5)	3
 SENESCHAL	 (4)	3
 NEUROMANCER 2	 (1)	3
 GRIFFIN EXORCIST		2
 ABERRATION		5
 PURIFIER 2	 (1)	1
 PEST OF FLESH 3	 (1)	1
 PEST OF FLESH 4	 (1)	1

STRATEGY A FORCED PASSAGE

1 Sebastien activates his Keratis warrior and plays the "Muscular Hypertrophy" mutation on him. The fighter moves into contact with the seneschal.

Arnaud: "Luckily my seneschal is still in Defensive Combat since the previous round."

Sebastien: "Argh! I lost track of the  counter on the game board."

Sebastien plays an Action card (SL +2) and Arnaud cannot perform a hindrance. The Keratis warrior (NV: 1) now has 8 in Offensive Combat. Sebastien decides on a Heroic Strike. The clone nevertheless reaches an SL of 7 thanks to his ripper voultge (SL +2), his Muscular Hypertrophy (SL +1), Frenzy/I and an Action card. Unfortunately, Sebastien gets a "10" on his die.

2 Arnaud activates Venerable Ambrosius and announces a shot. After having moved this fighter he chooses the Keratis warrior to be his target, which in principle is impossible since Venerable Ambrosius is in contact with an opponent: the tiger of Dirz. No Action cards are played and Arnaud chooses Novice Firing, which allows him to carry out his attack. Yet it is unfortunately a failure.

3 Sebastien activates his tiger of Dirz in Offensive Combat. He selects the seneschal to be his target and announces a Master Strike. The creature inflicts the seneschal with one Wound.

4 Arnaud activates the seneschal and declares Offensive Combat. After having moved this fighter he chooses the Keratis warrior to be his target. No Action cards are played and Arnaud declares an Expert Strike. The seneschal (NV: 2) reaches an SL of 7 thanks to the Expert Strike (SL +2), his combined weapons (SL +2) and his Conviction/I. He slays his opponent and Sebastien draws an Action card.

5 Sebastien activates his neuromancer and plays the "Endorphin Injector" mutation on him. He then chooses the "Rage" power (the Natural Roll is successful) and announces a Basic Move.



Sebastien: "I really want the neuromancer to remain in the game until the end of the mission. I would like to see what happens when he boosts my aberration."

6 Arnaud activates his exorcist and announces Defensive Combat.

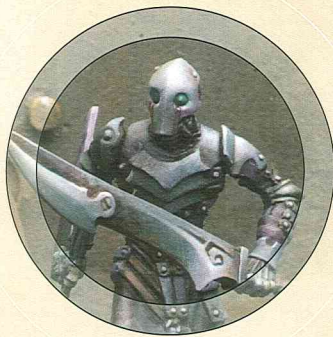
Arnaud: "I'm sticking to my plan: the exorcist must hold the door at all costs."

7 Sebastien activates his aberration and announces Defensive Combat.

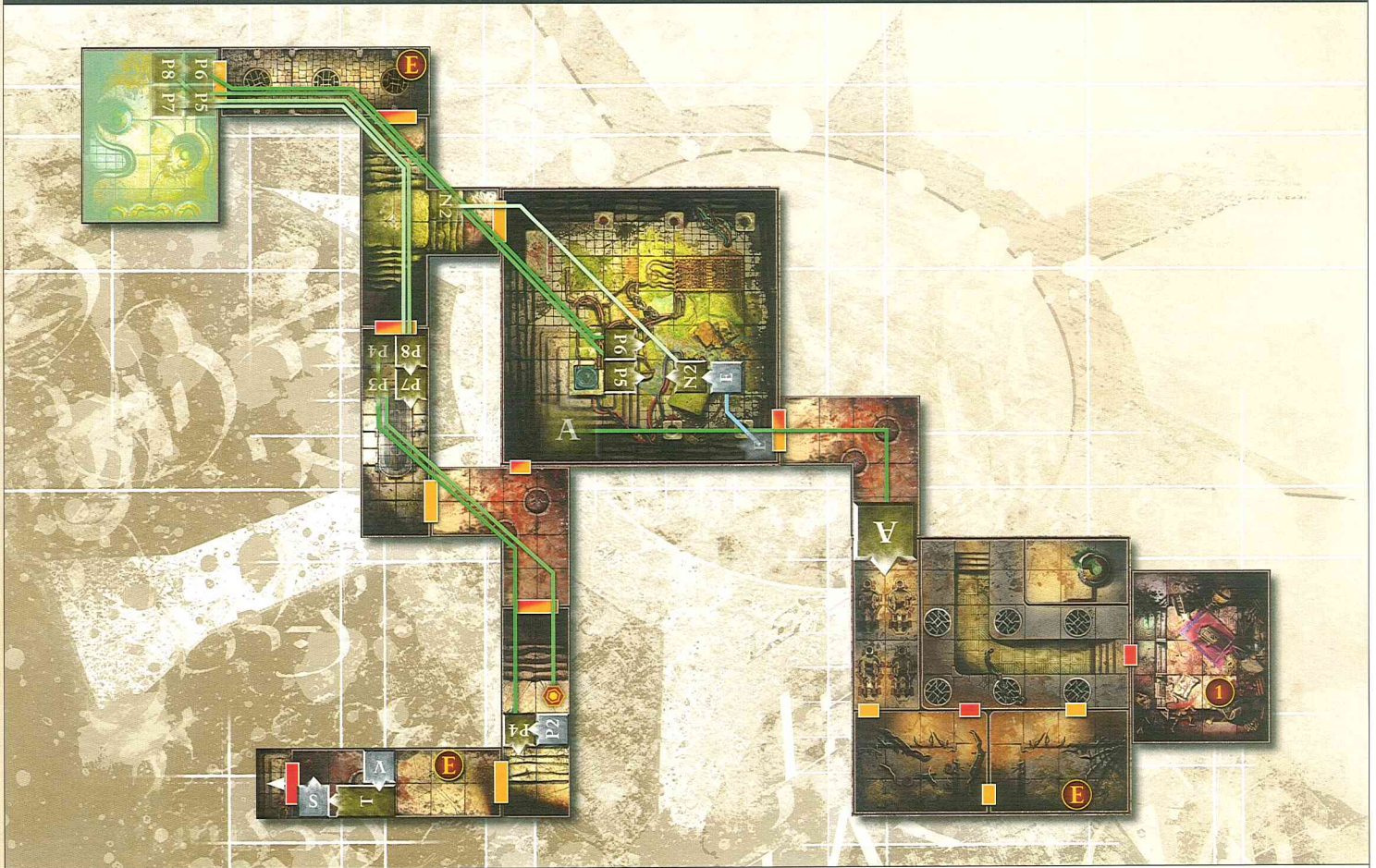
Sebastien: "The 'Titan' aptitude makes me lose a round in this situation because it prohibits diagonal movements by the aberration, which I place at this spot to avoid a Griffin redeployment and any 'attack from behind' bonus in case of Offensive Combat."

8 Arnaud activates his purifier and announces Firing. After having moved his miniature he chooses the tiger of Dirz as his target. No Action cards are played and the purifier misses his target.

9 Sebastien activates and moves two pests of flesh.



ROUND 7



ACTIVATION SEQUENCE: ROUND 7

FIGHTER	MODE (LEVEL OF MASTERY)	CURRENT NV	FIGHTER	MODE (LEVEL OF MASTERY)	CURRENT NV
1 TIGER OF DIRZ	(6)	3	4 ABERRATION	(1)	5
1 VENERABLE AMBROSIOUS	(2)	3	5 PEST OF FLESH 4	(1)	1
2 PEST OF FLESH 3	(1)	1	6 PEST OF FLESH 5	(1)	1
2 SENESCHAL	(6)	2	7 PEST OF FLESH 6	(1)	1
3 NEUROMANCER 2	(1)	3	8 PEST OF FLESH 7	(1)	1
3 GRIFFIN EXORCIST	(2)	2	9 PEST OF FLESH 8	(1)	1

At the beginning of the round Sebastien uses his two ranks to deploy four pests of flesh. The Griffin exorcist uses his power on the aberration's "Brutish strength" aptitude. Arnaud gets a "2" on the die, meaning a success.

Sebastien: "The Griffins are wounded. In all, it's enough to inflict them with nine Wounds to annihilate

their squad. With many pests of flesh I'll easily manage to finish them off."

No Action cards are used for the Activation Roll. Arnaud and Sebastien both get a "5." They therefore both roll the dice again and Sebastien wins.

Arnaud: "I'm using the same tactic as in the previous round: Ambrosius to weaken the enemy and the seneschal to give the last blow. The purifier is in third place and the exorcist last because being in Defensive Combat they don't risk much."

Sebastien: "With a bit of luck the final blow will be dealt in this round! So I will first activate the tiger

of Dirz to finish off the seneschal, and then the pest of flesh to slay the purifier. After that I'll modify my strategy a little. Being isolated, the Griffin exorcist can be beaten and I'll concentrate more on this tile."

Sebastien announces Offensive Combat for his tiger of Dirz. He doesn't move him and directly targets the seneschal by playing an Action card (SL +2). Arnaud cannot hinder him. Sebastien announces a Heroic Strike. Despite an SL of 7, he fails.

Arnaud activates Venerable Ambrosius and announces Firing. After having moved him, he chooses the tiger of Dirz to be his target. No Action cards are played. Arnaud chooses Novice Firing. He fails in spite of the Vengeful Hand of Merin.

Sebastien activates his third pest of flesh and announces a Basic Move. He brings it into contact with the purifier and sacrifices it, killing the Griffin fighter. Arnaud draws an Action card (SL +4).

Arnaud activates his seneschal and announces Offensive Combat. After having moved him, he targets the tiger of Dirz and uses an Action card (SL +4). Sebastien doesn't play a hindrance and Arnaud chooses a Heroic Strike (made possible by the Action card). Furthermore, he announces a Combined Attack. The SL is 9 (NV: 2; SL +2 for combined weapons; SL +1 for Conviction/I; and SL +4 for the Action card). Arnaud gets a "I" and inflicts the tiger of Dirz with three Wounds, sending it to its grave. The Combined Attack is wasted. Sebastien draws an Action

card.

Sebastien activates his neuromancer and chooses the "Rage" power. He successfully uses it on the aberration and then announces Firing. He targets the Griffin exorcist and misses him.

Arnaud activates the exorcist and announces Offensive Combat. He moves his fighter to engage the neuromancer and targets him. No Action cards are played and Arnaud chooses a Novice Strike in order to cancel out his Wound modifier. Yet this attack is a failure.

Arnaud: "I didn't place the Griffin exorcist behind the neuromancer because this would have exposed him to an attack from behind by the aberration. I was almost sure that I wouldn't be able to kill the neuromancer in just one round."

Sebastien activates his aberration and announces a Basic Move.

Arnaud: "He broke my lines of defence!"

Sebastien: "I should have done this right from the start!"

Sebastien activates and moves his pests of flesh.

Les deux prochains Rounds sont une véritable mise à mort, la chronique d'un échec annoncé pour les Griffons.

COMBINED ATTACK/X

This optional aptitude enables a warrior to make a number of free additional attacks – a maximum of one per round – during the game. The X on the warrior's reference card specifies the number of additional attacks that are permitted.

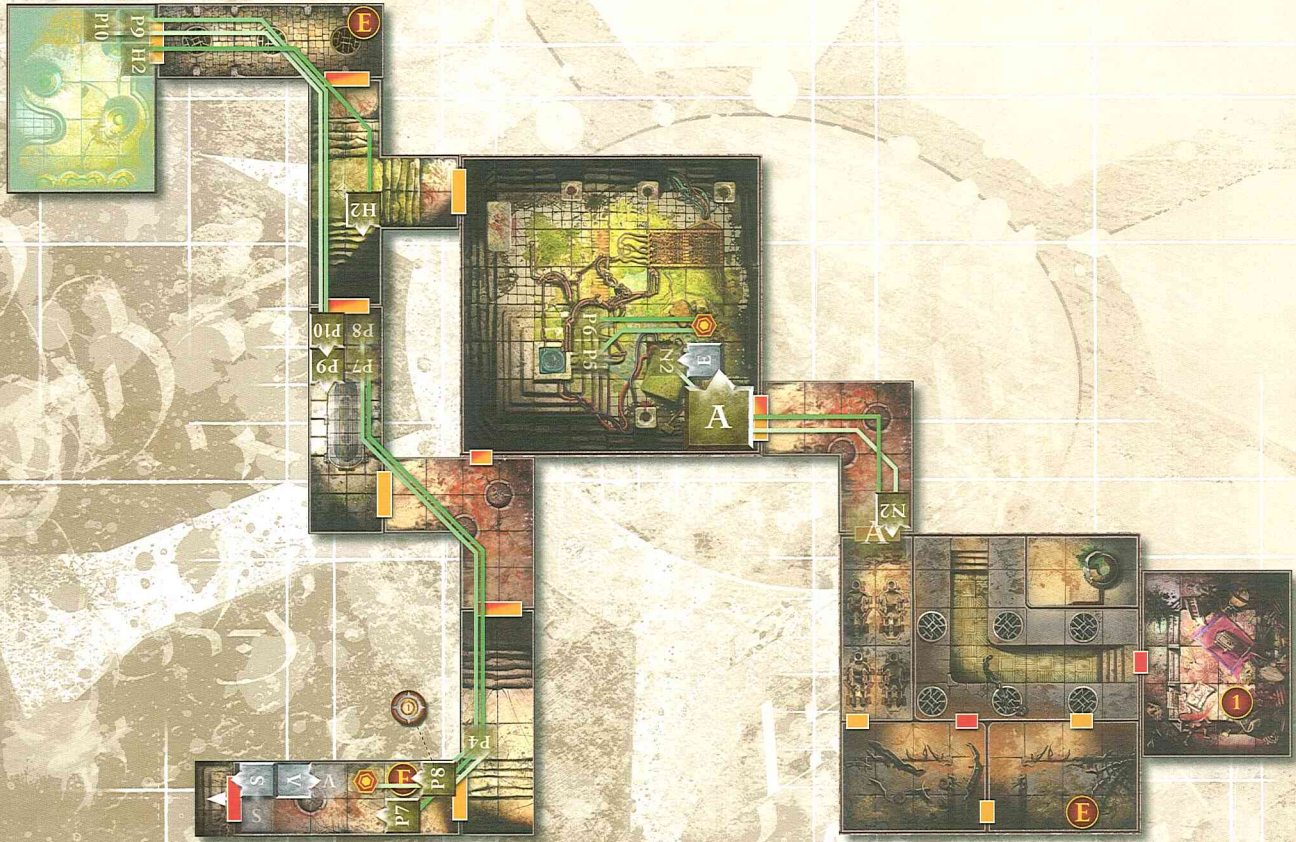
To carry out a Combined Attack, a warrior must be in base-to-base contact with the target and in Offensive Combat mode. The additional attack must be declared immediately before the Natural Roll is made for the first attack. If the first attack should eliminate the opponent, then the Combined Attack is nevertheless used up.

Whether the first attack succeeds or not, the assailant can attempt to wound his enemy again with a Natural Roll based on the NV that figures on his reference card, and not the value he has when making his second attack. Should he succeed, then the target automatically loses a Wound level.

NB: The "Defensive Combat" mode doesn't enable the target to avoid the second strike of a Combined Attack.



ROUNDS 8 AND 9: THE END OF THE GRIFFINS



ACTIVATION SEQUENCE: ROUND 8

FIGHTER	MODE (LEVEL OF MASTERY)	CURRENT NV	FIGHTER	MODE (LEVEL OF MASTERY)	CURRENT NV
 ΔBERRATIØN	 (6)	5	 PEST OF FLESH 5	 (1)	1
 GRIFFIN EXØRCIST	 (6)	2	 PEST OF FLESH 6	 (1)	1
 NEURØMÄNCER 2	 (1)	3	 PEST OF FLESH 7	 (1)	1
 VENERABLE ΔMBRØSIUS	 (3)	3	 PEST OF FLESH 8	 (1)	1
 HYBRID 2	 (1)	3	 PEST OF FLESH 9	 (1)	1
 SENESCHÄL	 (1)	2	 PEST OF FLESH 10	 (1)	1
 PEST OF FLESH 4	 (1)	1			





Sebastien: "Ambrosius can't withstand my horde of pests of flesh and Arnaud no longer has enough fighters left to fulfil his objective. These two rounds are long and painful, so we will spare you their account."

Arnaud: "You sure are lucky! He didn't spare me at all. The few mistakes I may have made during the game caused me much harm, and the incredible bad luck I was the victim of in these two last rounds finished me off. Sebastien wasn't any luckier, but no rolls are required in order to sacrifice the pests of flesh."

Sebastien: "That's why I put so many of them into play!"

Arnaud: "In spite of all this, this game remains exceptional. Until now I had never seen a *HYBRID* mission last longer than five rounds and include so many consecutive critical failures. Sebastien and I deserve a medal just for that."

Sebastien: "Don't put away the game board just yet; we still have to prepare the return game..."

ACTIVATION SEQUENCE: ROUND 9

FIGHTER	MODE (LEVEL OF MASTERY)	CURRENT nv
PEST OF FLESH 7	(1)	1
VENERABLE AMBROSIOUS	(1)	2
HYBRID 2	(1)	3
SENESCHAL	(1)	2
NEUROMANCER	(1)	1
PEST OF FLESH 8	(1)	1
PEST OF FLESH 9	(1)	1
PEST OF FLESH 10	(1)	1
ABERRATION	(1)	5
SKORIZE WARRIOR	(1)	3

CONCLUSION

Arnaud: "Now it's my turn to play the Scorpions. I'm not counting on Sebastien having bad luck and plan on preventing him from reaching the door by deploying fighters endowed with the 'Infiltration/X' aptitude right from the start of the game, supported by a neuromancer. Indeed, even though he won, I think that Sebastien didn't fully use the potential of this fighter who has a strategic role within the group, a bit like that of Ambrosius."

Sebastien: "I must succeed where Arnaud failed. His analysis is right and I selected two templars instead of the seneschal. I'm keeping the exorcist (who caused me much harm), but I'll place my fighters differently in the corridor leading to the exit. Standing side by side they'll form an impassable barrier and my templars can then calmly set the door with explosives. At least I hope so..."

THE RED DRAGON'S OPINION

Arnaud should have selected the minelayer instead of the seneschal. He would then have been able to set several explosive charges or timer activated bombs to slow down the enemy's advance. He also could have bet on strength in numbers by selecting two Rank 1 fighters instead of the seneschal of Rank 2 in order to make two rolls per round. Moreover, he used his auras badly: with an Aura of Appeasement it is best to activate Venerable Ambrosius as late as possible in the round. And finally, he sometimes lost his cool and made unwise decisions for his activation sequences as of round 6.

The game went rather well for Sebastien, even though this mission's original deployment caused him some worry. He should have used his pests of flesh much earlier. What more, it is better to activate the neuromancer as soon as possible in the round in order to take advantage of his psychic powers. And finally, he should have chosen a strategy (reaching the door or Objective 1) instead of just reacting to Arnaud's choices and to the results of his rolls. Fortunately, his use of the pests of flesh largely made up for this error.



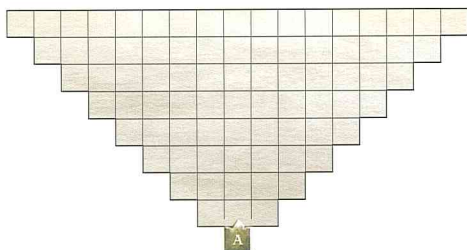


KEEP AN EYE OPEN... THE GOOD ONE!

BEFORE BEING ABLE TO KILL ONE'S OPPONENT, ONE MUST BE ABLE TO SEE HIM. THE DIM LIGHT AND THE CLUTTER IN THE HERESIARCH'S LABORATORIES SOMETIMES MAKE COMBAT DIFFICULT. THIS ARTICLE'S GOAL IS TO CLARIFY THE HYBRID RULES ON ANGLES OF VISION AND LINES OF SIGHT.

ANGLES OF VISION AND DEAD ANGLES

The angle of vision is the triangular area in which a fighter can, in principle, see his opponents. It complements the playing of certain interactions such as opening a door. The depth of this angle is determined in the same way as that of an aura (see diagram below).



In order to determine the orientation (and thus the disposition) of the angle of vision, it may be useful to paint or mark the edge of the base that corresponds to the front of the miniature.

Within an angle of vision there are two possibilities:

- There is a "direct" line of sight.
- There is a dead angle.

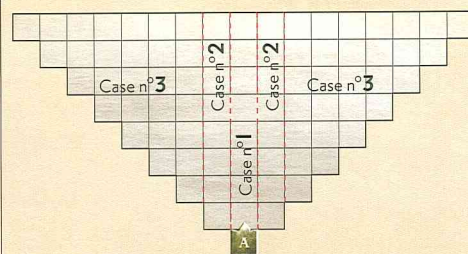
LEGEND

				Fighters
				Dead angle
				Dead angle of the obstacle straight in front
				Dead angle of the obstacle to the side
				Enclosed squares Lantern
				Angle of vision Angle of vision
				Angle of vision Lighted area

Within an angle of vision, obstacles (miniatures, columns, etc.) can block a fighter's "direct" line of sight. These elements generate shadow zones that hide a part of the game board from the fighter's sight. These hidden areas are dead angles.

Determining the exact extent of these shadow zones is sometimes tricky. Yet there are precise rules. The illustrations on the game tiles (with the exception of the lines representing walls) are never an obstacle. The other elements on the game board to be taken

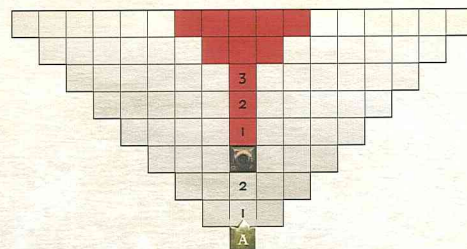
into account when determining a "direct" line of sight depend on four specific cases (see diagram below).



CASE NR. 1

The obstacle is standing in the line of sight straight in front of the fighter. To determine the dead angle it causes, one must:

- Count the number of squares between the fighter and the obstacle as if it were being targeted.
- Count the same number of squares as in a) behind the obstacle, which become just as many dead angle squares.
- Imagine a new inverted triangle beginning from the next square, which is also part of the dead angle (see diagram to the right).



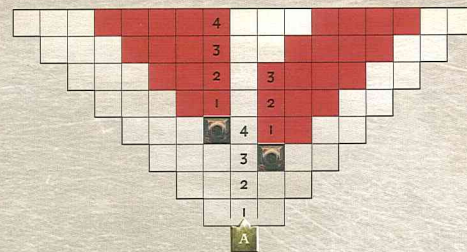
CASE NR. 2

The obstacle is slightly to the side of the middle of the angle of vision.

- Count the number of squares that the fighter would have to move for the obstacle to be directly on his right or left side (depending on the situation).
- Count the same number of squares of dead angle behind the obstacle in a straight line and parallel to the imaginary path made in a).
- Imagine, starting from the last counted square, a staircase leading away from the middle of the angle of vision (one of the dead angle's edges is thus determined).
- Imagine, starting from the obstacle itself, a staircase leading away from the middle of the angle of vision (the other edge of the dead angle is thus determined).

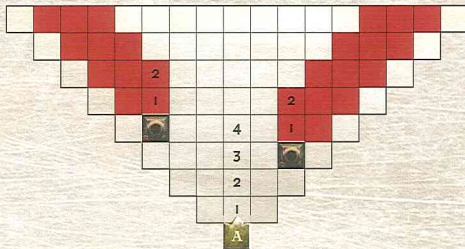
The zone between the two edges determined in c) and d) is the dead angle.

NB: On the diagram below, one of the edges of the dead angle to the left doesn't appear because it is outside of the angle of vision!



CASE NR. 3

The obstacle is well to the side of the middle of the angle of vision. One must proceed in the same way as for case nr. 2. However, in step b) one must subtract the number of squares between the obstacle and the middle of the angle of vision from the number of dead angle squares counted behind the obstacle (see diagram below).

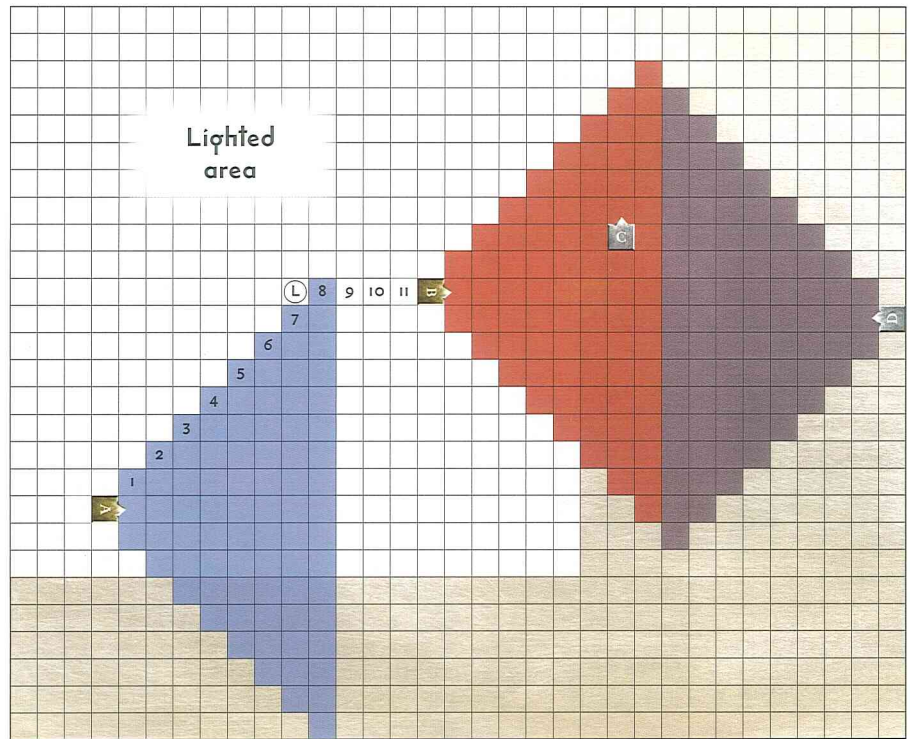
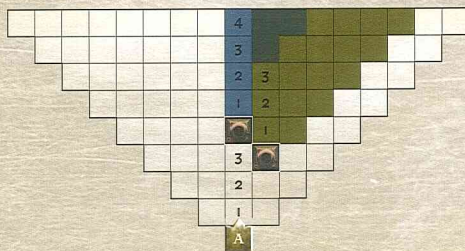


SPECIAL CASE:

OBSTACLES THAT OCCUPY SEVERAL SQUARES

When determining the dead angle caused by an obstacle occupying several squares (such as grenades of Darkness in NEMESIS) one must consider each of the occupied squares as a different obstacle. One must then use one of the three cases listed above to determine the dead angle in each case. These shadow zones are combined together to create the total dead angle caused by the obstacle. If there are squares enclosed by several dead angles, then they are also part of it (see diagram below).

NB: Two diagonally adjacent obstacles totally block an angle of vision.



RANGE OF VISION

The *HYBRID* rules set the "default" range of vision at eight squares. This range also counts for long-distance weapons. Thus, whatever the circumstances, if a fighter in Firing mode has a "direct" line of sight onto a target, then he can always fire at it.

EYE OF THE LYNX/X

This aptitude allows fighters to see further and thus to fire further. Furthermore, the value of Eye of the Lynx/X is always added to the range of vision, even when the range is equal to "0."

Example: *Venerable Ambrosius (Eye of the Lynx/2) is fighting in a laboratory affected by Lights Out. His angle of vision's range is reduced to 5 squares but thanks to his aptitude he can really see 7 squares!*

Eye of the Lynx/X is therefore especially useful to marksmen who aren't very fond of hand-to-hand combat (such as Venerable Ambrosius). This aptitude also allows fighters to fire at opponents placed in Skilled Firing without risking being targeted themselves. Indeed, thanks to the increased range of his angle of vision, a fighter with Eye of the Lynx/X can see (8 + X squares) without being seen (8 squares by default without this aptitude). This aptitude remains active all the time, even when it isn't necessarily to the fighter's advantage: to place himself into Skilled Firing mode he must be unable to see any opponents and since the Eye of the Lynx/X is also active in such a situation, he may end up being unable to use this level of mastery at a crucial moment.

THE NEMESIS LANTERNS

The diagram above explains the sometimes indirect effects of a lantern (see *NEMESIS*). It projects a light that affects a perimeter of ten squares in the same way as auras.

Thanks to this zone, A can see and fire at B though the latter is standing 12 squares from A (which is further than the "default" angle of vision range of 8 squares). Unfortunately, B can't do anything against A since the latter is located outside of his angle of vision. However, B can fire at C because even though C is outside of the lighted area, he remains within B's normal angle of vision.

On the other hand C cannot be targeted by D because both of these fighters are outside of the lighted area and C is also outside of D's normal angle of vision.

Nevertheless, D can fire at B and even at A because both of them are present in the lighted area and can be seen by all, no matter the distance between them and their observers. Once again, B cannot target D because the latter is outside of the lighted area and of B's normal angle of vision.

And last but not least, there are two special cases:

- If, in the same situation, the lantern was being carried by a fighter with the "Eye of the Lynx/X" aptitude, then he wouldn't see further than ten squares because the rules on the "Lantern" card do not modify the angle of vision's range but create an exception to it.
- Interaction between the "Lantern" and "Lights Out" cards. The Lantern does not modify the angle of vision's range and is therefore not affected by Lights Out. When the latter happens, then the Lantern still generates a lighted area with a radius of ten squares.



TRIGGERING DEFENSIVE COMBAT

Defensive Combat, like the other action modes, must be declared at the moment that the fighter is activated (see *HYBRID*, p. 19). Once this is done, the fighter's miniature can be moved on the game board if desired. Indeed, every game mode allows a fighter to move in the laboratories thanks to his Mt value. The level of mastery chosen for Defensive Combat is only announced later, at the moment that the fighter must defend himself, meaning:

- During his movement if he is targeted by an opponent in Skilled Firing (see *HYBRID*, p. 21).
- The activation of an opponent who attacks the fighter thanks to the "Offensive Combat" or "Firing" mode is activated.

Furthermore, the player can choose a different level of mastery every time he makes a new parry. He might even be forced to do so by the use of Action cards. Indeed, these increase or reduce the value of an action mode and a fighter can thus be obliged to use a level of mastery that is lower than the one previously used.

NB: A fighter in "Defensive Combat" mode can use two different levels of mastery when facing two attacks carried out by the same opponent, especially thanks to a Skilled Strike or Heroic Firing. Yet the "Defensive Combat" mode is ineffective against a Combined Attack.

Once it has been chosen, the "Defensive Combat" mode remains active until the fighter's next activation. However, there are two exceptions to this rule, which each cancel the mode and leave the fighter defenceless:

YOU'LL NEVER GET ME!

NOBODY IS SAFE INSIDE THE HYBRID LABORATORIES. BLOOD IS FALLING AND BULLETS FLY THROUGH THE AIR IN THESE OLD TUNNELS HAUNTED BY GENETIC ABOMINATIONS. VERY OFTEN THE ONLY REASONABLE REACTION IN FACE OF THIS VIOLENCE IS TO READJUST ONE'S SHIELD AND PREPARE ONE'S DEFENCE! THIS ARTICLE EXPLAINS HOW TO EFFICIENTLY USE DEFENSIVE COMBAT.

- The "Defensive Combat" mode is used without success;
- The fighter in "Defensive Combat" mode suffers a Wound, no matter its causes.

These two exceptions have no effect if the fighter has chosen the Heroic Parry level of mastery. Furthermore, this level of mastery allows the fighter to continue benefiting from it even if his Defensive Combat value becomes lower than 6, including due to Action cards.

PARTICULAR EXAMPLES

ONE AGAINST ONE

Venerable Ambrosius is confronting a hybrid.

At the start of the round the two fighters are already in base-to-base contact with each other. Venerable Ambrosius is activated first. The Griffin player chooses the "Defensive Combat" mode. Later on in the activation sequence the hybrid is activated and the Scorpion player chooses the "Offensive Combat" mode. The hybrid attacks Venerable Ambrosius by using the Skilled Strike level of mastery. Unfortunately for him, the Griffin manages to avoid the first attack thanks to the Master Parry level of mastery. Thus the round ends.

At the beginning of the second round the situation of the two fighters hasn't changed, but this time the hybrid is the first between the two to be activated. He uses a Master Strike to try to flatten Venerable Ambrosius, who again calls on the Master Parry level of mastery. Indeed, as is indicated in the rules on the "Defensive Combat" mode (see *HYBRID*, p. 20), Venerable Ambrosius having made a successful parry and not having suffered a Wound or being activated

again, he remains in "Defensive Combat" mode. The Griffin successfully uses this mode again and parries the hybrid's attack. Later on in the round Venerable Ambrosius is activated and goes into "Offensive Combat" mode. The hybrid has already been activated and has chosen Offensive Combat, so he cannot defend himself. Guided by Merin's hand, Venerable Ambrosius slays the hybrid with a single blow.

During this confrontation, Ambrosius carried out three actions in two rounds: a parry in the first round, another in the second one, and an attack also in the second one.

Imagine for a moment that in the first round the hybrid successfully used an Expert Strike instead of a Skilled one. Having uselessly used Defensive Combat, Venerable Ambrosius would have lost its benefits after this attack. Thus, in the second round he would not have been able to benefit from this mode and would have been defenceless in face of the hybrid, who would then have been able to use an Expert Strike to massacre the careless templar.

ONE AGAINST MANY

A seneschal of the Lodge of Hod is challenged by four hybrids.

At the beginning of the first round, caught between his opponents, the seneschal uses Defensive Combat and gets ready for the worst. Later on the first of the hybrids is activated and attacks the seneschal thanks to the "Offensive Combat" mode.

The Griffin player decides to risk it all: he uses an Action card to add "3" to the seneschal's NV as well as to the "Defensive Combat" mode's value. The Griffin now has a "6" in Defensive Combat and successfully uses a powerful Heroic Parry. Once this has been played, the seneschal's Defensive Combat value goes back down to "3," yet the rules on Heroic



Parry state that the fighter remains at this level of mastery until he voluntarily changes modes. So he's ready for the next fights! During the rest of the round the other hybrids attack the seneschal. Only one of them manages to wound him, but the Heroic Parry remains active.

At the beginning of the second round the situation is the same. However, the seneschal is activated first. Time is running out and the Griffin player decides to take the initiative. The seneschal therefore uses Offensive Combat and manages to kill one of the four hybrids. However, during the remainder of the round the three other Scorpions beat the defenceless seneschal to a pulp.

During this confrontation the seneschal carried out five actions in two rounds: four parries in the first round and an attack in the second one. If he had remained in Defensive Combat during the last round, he would have been able to carry out two times four parries, meaning eight actions!

THE BEST DEFENCE...

Because it allows multiple actions to be carried out during a same round, the "Defensive Combat" mode may seem a bit too powerful. However, it only leaves

one option: survival! Yet one doesn't win a game of *HYBRID* by saving one's skin but by fulfilling mission objectives. While a fighter is courageously parrying blows he is not helping his companions.

Nevertheless, this doesn't mean that the "Defensive Combat" mode is useless. One must learn to use it at the right moment. When enemy fighters spend

their time attacking a fighter in Defensive Combat they aren't either carrying out their mission. This mode therefore allows the enemy's advance to be slowed, a position to be held, etc. In *HYBRID* actions are extremely precious and making the enemy waste his on an untouchable fighter can be a strategy that pays off.

DEFENSIVE COMBAT LEVELS OF MASTERY

This table summarises the various parries. In addition to the information given, all parries share certain characteristics:

- They are all resolved by making a Natural Roll that, if successful, allows the fighter to cancel out one attack made by an opponent.
- They can all be used in hand-to-hand combat.

PARRY	FROM A DISTANCE?	SPECIAL EFFECT
Basic	Yes	None
Novice	No	Possibility to Wound an attacker
Skilled	No	Possibility to counter-attack
Expert	No	SL + 2
Master	No	2d10 are rolled
Heroic	Yes	Cannot be cancelled



THE BALLISTAE OF ALAHAN

THE BALLISTAE OF ALAHAN PROVIDE THE ARMY OF THE LIEN WITH IMPRESSIVE FIREPOWER. SOME STRATEGIC ADVICE IS REQUIRED TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THESE FIRMIDABLE WAR MACHINES WHILE FORTIFICATION SPREADS ENITE THE CONFRONTATION AND RAG'NAROK GAMING TABLES.

DEPLOYMENT

The ballistae of Alahan are in the category of "immobile war machines." They can only be moved by their servants, who suffer a Movement penalty equal to the Weight of the machine (5) that they are moving. Seeing that only servants of the ballista of Alahan can be designated to be servants of these weapons and that their MOV is equal to 10, this machine can only be moved by 5 cm (10 cm when running) per movement phase. The ballistae of Alahan, like most war machines of their category, cannot be moved over great distances during a game. It is therefore primordial to deploy them well on the battlefield, or else their efficiency can end up being significantly reduced.

Like for all immobile war machines, the deployment of these ballistae must be made in accordance with the army's global strategy. These machines

nevertheless present considerable advantages. Their reasonable cost (55 A.P.), the possibility to arm them with various types of ammunition for use against all kinds of enemies, and their servants' various abilities make them versatile weapons that can fulfil a great number of roles.

Here are three types of deployment. Each one has certain advantages and inconveniences. An advised strategist will place his ballistae in different ways in order to best exploit the possibilities they provide.

COVER AND SUPPORT

The ballistae are placed at and/or behind the battlefront. This is the most conventional deployment.

Advantages: The ballistae placed in this way can easily be protected without distancing their escort from the main body of their army. They successively fulfil two roles. At first their salvos give cover to the troops'

advance. Then, once combat has been engaged, they concentrate on the enemy's pockets of resistance and rear-guard.

Inconveniences: The ballistae are placed within medium or long range of the main part of the battle and this affects the precision of their shots. It is best to place them at a vantage point such as on an element of the scenery in order to clear their servants' lines of sight and to provide numerous firing opportunities.

This deployment has a particularity that is both an advantage and an inconvenience. A war machine placed in support is an ideal target for another war machine that is also placed in support.

It may prove wise to neutralise the enemy machines deployed in this way to avoid a relatively useless exchange of fire that can even be careless (when exchanging fire using projectiles that disperse).





OBSTRUCTIVE FIRE

The ballistae are placed at the front line next to the army's conventional troops. This deployment is very bold.

Advantages: The ballistae fire at the best range and weaken the enemy even before first contact has been made. This type of deployment in face of a relatively unprepared enemy can be very dissuasive.

Inconveniences: Unless they have an escort, the ballistae placed for obstructive fire are vulnerable to enemy marksmen, Scouts and rapid troops. Being priority targets, they are quickly engaged (and therefore neutralised).

DISSUASIVE FIRE

The ballistae are placed like sentinels in order to cover a place of passage such as a gorge, a clearing, etc. This deployment depends a lot on the scenery placed on the battlefield and on the randomness inherent to the deployment phase.

Advantages: The opponent hesitates engaging his most valuable troops in the area covered by the ballistae. His movements are channelled towards a different part of the battlefield, which can offer many strategic advantages.

Inconveniences: Unless one is confronting a rash opponent, the ballistae won't be seeing much action during the game. The enemy can also engage his weakest troops in the covered area to form a barrier blocking the line of fire or to intercept the ballista at

a lower cost. This inconvenience can be avoided by placing the ballista on an element of the scenery that is hard to reach.

AMMUNITION

The ballistae of Alahan can fire three different types of projectiles: spears, loose stones or boulders. The choice is made at the moment that the shot is played.

This potential strengthens the ballistae of Alahan's versatility. A wise choice of projectile combined with an appropriate deployment can turn a ballista into a true weapon of mass destruction.

SPEAR

Values: Spear/STR 14, range 25-50-70. Two shots per round. Heavy artillery.

This type of projectile traces a straight and bloody path through the enemy ranks. Its exceptional Strength pierces the most solid of armour and its status of perforating heavy artillery allows it to reach targets hidden by a screen of troops. Using the spear is recommended against small armies of low resistance, especially when the projectile's trajectory is sure to meet several enemy fighters who are hard to eliminate in other ways.

The spear is also useful for destroying enemy war machines. Its long range and its Strength let it hit armoured and distant targets.

The spear is perfectly suited for the "cover and support" deployment.

LOOSE STONES

Values: Loose stones/STR 8, range 25-35-45. Heavy artillery/Zone.

The loose stones' modest range is compensated for by their status of heavy artillery with zone effect (meaning that the template is used). They hit all enemies located under the dispersion template. This is useful ammunition when having to quickly eliminate numerous enemy fighters within short range. Loose stones are the bane of lightly protected, rapid and numerous armies because they mercilessly stop their attacks in their tracks.

Loose stones are recommended for the "obstructive fire" deployment.

BOULDER

Values: Boulder/STR 12, range 20-40-60. Two shots per round. Light artillery/Zone.

The boulder is the perfect intermediate projectile. Its ranges give it good precision at medium range where most of the frays take place. Its Strength can finish off the most tenacious opponents and its status of artillery with zone effect allows it to hit several opponents at a time. The boulder is ideal against armies made up of both light and heavy troops.

It is the preferred projectile for the "dissuasive fire" deployment and can also come in handy for "obstructive fire" against armies waiting in the rear of the battlefield.



MANAGARM

THE TRAITORESS

PORTRAIT

Aen had received only one true shock in all her life as a young female Wolfen: the revelations of Vile-Tis. She had joined the devourers about four months earlier, and was now standing before Meyleen, the eclipsante who had revealed the truth to her and was now teaching her the secrets of her caste.

Aen's bestiality was barely curbed by the first lessons from her formidable weapon-mistress. Mixing instinctive fighting with the more elaborate techniques she had recently learned, she thought herself invincible.

Aen felt the second shock of her life when Meyleen put her down with a short series of simple motions.

The bewildered Aen collected her thoughts and looked at her opponent with hatred.

"I know this look well," Meyleen said. "I gave the same one to Managarm when she revealed my weaknesses to me."

Aen's anger vanished as she heard the name of the Traitoress.

"You received the teachings of Managarm? I thought she had killed all her students."

"There are so many rumours about her."

"I have also heard that her claws are red with the blood of thousands of victims... Where did she come from? What is she like? Is she as gruesome as they say?"

"Thousands of victims! It sounds preposterous, but knowing her, I wouldn't be that much surprised if it were true."

Meyleen helped her pupil back up.

"When the Beast came to Aarklash, Managarm was one of the most beautiful warriors of the Throne of Stars' stone circle, which was led at the time by Killyox. She was already shrouded in mystery and legend: she was the distant descendent of Y'Anrylh, the most cruel and tyrannical pack leader ever to walk upon Aarklash. Rumour had it then that the blood of Managarm was under a curse. Even the fierce predators dared not raise their voices against her, for they were afraid of bringing ill fortune upon their heads. To defy her was a hazardous gambit. To compensate for her lack of sheer physical strength, she had learned the fighting techniques inherited from her dreaded ancestor, the same techniques I have begun to teach you. Only two warriors could match her when confronting the enemy: Killyox, of course, for he was the leader of the pack, and a male called Onyx, who was barely older than she was.

"The call of the Beast roared throughout Aarklash, awakening the murderous blood of Managarm. As a result, she left the circle of stones without even looking back. Killyox saw this as an act of treachery. He sent his best warriors after her... fruitlessly. None came back. Onyx himself was on her trail when the Throne of Stars, deprived of its fiercest defenders, fell to Darkness.

"Vile-Tis was impressed by Managarm's fighting style. He offered to help her improve it if she would in return train a handful of female warriors in her own image. The Traitoress agreed to the bargain and became the Beast's assassin, the first of all the eclipsantes. Then she began a macabre pilgrimage all over Aarklash, but no one knows exactly what stations she followed.

"Her journey led her very early into the Black Woods of the Drones, for what obscure reason only she knew. There, in the oppressive atmosphere swathing that sinister location, she crossed the path of the Korgan, the giant hyena that escorts her. I was told she managed to tame the vicious beast in a very short time. Ever since, it's been following her everywhere like a carrion-eater behind a great predator.

"Managarm is murder personified. Under normal circumstances, she is a nimble fighter, deadly accurate and very resourceful. When the hour of slaughter comes, however, something changes in her gaze, in her speech, and in the way she moves. She becomes a ruthless killer who responds to the slightest aggravation with an incredible violence. If you see her at such a time, take care not to challenge her in any conceivable manner, if you value your own life. These murderous impulses have given rise to the rumour you mentioned earlier. Managarm did kill many of her students over trivial matters. I have seen her cut the throat of one of my rivals because she bled too much after an ordeal. The sight of the fluid of life had awakened something... the beast that slumbers inside Managarm."

"A rival?" Aen interrupted.

"Yes. As you will find out very soon, an eclipsante rarely teaches more than one student at a time. Once the primary instinct is tamed and the basic techniques are acquired, they begin to compete against one another inside the Eclipse, the group made up of the weapon-mistress and the candidates. The best ones figure out the secret techniques and form a true hunting pack around their weapon-mistress. The Eclipse is a trying time, when we are more dangerous than ever. Managarm honoured the pact of the Beast: she gathered the first Eclipse. As far as I know,

it was the only one she ever led, and I was allowed the honour of participating. Those who survived now pass on a lethal knowledge, forged in the blood of centuries and honed by the Beast."

"You must have been the best," Aen ventured.

"Actually no. The best student was the unfortunate one with the slit throat I mentioned a moment ago. I did choose you because you look a lot like her."

Aen went pale.

"How many shall we be?"

"Nine," Meyleen answered. "I see you got your breath back. I'm waiting for you."

Aen was more cautious now than in her first onslaught. For her, the Eclipse had already begun. In her heart of hearts, Meyleen could not prevent herself from thinking back upon the story she had just told. An old fear resurfaced in her mind and she imagined herself standing in her old rival's position, with her throat torn open.

On that day, thought the weapon-mistress as she watched her student, I had understood the meaning of Y'Anrylh's so-called curse, the irrepressible instinct for murder that stains the destiny of his descendants. But I was wrong. As I watch you, Aen, I realise that Y'Anrylh's spirit has survived through the centuries in the blood of his people, and that we are his new pack.



The library was located in the highest tower of the imperial palace in Arcavia. It filled the whole width of the donjon, spread its shelves over two storeys, and contained one of the most incredible collections of scrolls, tablets and spellbooks in all of Aarklash. Among the thousands of works in the place, there were some forbidden by the Church of Merin, put on the Index by the Holy Inquisition, but no Church official would ever dare challenge their ownership by the Emperor. A fire crackled in the hearth and tried to heat up the vast chamber. A massive table of precious wood, sealed with the imperial griffin and covered with many manuscripts, occupied the place of honour in the centre of the room. Settled in a comfortable armchair of black wood beside the table was the sole occupant of the room.

Octave IX had made a habit of retiring to his library late into the night to meditate. Dawn would often find him still bent over some document or engrossed in a rare book. Tonight, the emperor was showing a particular interest for the history of gunpowder, this Cynwall heritage that had now become part of the regular outfit of a great number of soldiers in his legions. The black powder was what gave the Griffins their supremacy in battle - their gunpowder and their faith in the fiery god...

The emperor had gathered every document likely to supply him with information on that subject matter. At first, he took up a small-sized work. This humble-looking book (a wandering preacher or a tutor-priest could have owned one exactly like it) told the widely popular story of Severian. This legend, well known in every circle of Akkylannian society, mentioned the very first time a soldier of the Griffin had wielded a firearm. The emperor brought the candle closer and began to read.

THE LEGEND OF SEVERIAN

"Shortly after the sealing of the Alliance of Light, the authorities in Kaiber decided to send a party of warriors on a reconnaissance mission inside the dead lands. Each people guarding the mountain pass appointed one scout, the stealthiest and the bravest they could find among their ranks. The Lions of Alahan chose Egail the Nimble, an archer with eagle eyes; the Cynwall commander nominated his own son, Elnaë the dragon-squire; and the seneschals of the Griffin selected Severian the Dauntless. The three soldiers donned their gear in silence and left the fortress to enter the barony of Gloom.

The scouts went boldly forward into the heart of Acheron. Their mission was to go as far as possible, in order to observe the movements of the enemy. Their journey proved to be difficult in this place where the sun could hardly break the cloud-blackened sky, where only mosses and lichens could grow on the rocky chaos of a landscape, where every source of water was tainted by death and disease. Having marched on for several days,

THE SECRET OF GUNPOWDER

SOME AKKYLANNIAN FUSILIERS CLAIM THAT MERIN SPEAKS THROUGH THE MUZZLES OF GUNS, AND THAT THE FIERY GOD'S WRATH BURST OUT WITH EVERY REPORT. EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE NOT QUITE IN LINE WITH THE OFFICIAL CHURCH DOGMA, SUCH REMARKS ARE A TESTIMONY TO THE IMPORTANCE OF GUNPOWDER IN THE ARMIES OF THE GRIFFIN.

the three men came close to one of the Claws of Terror, the tormented castles of the lords of Acheron. To their horror, they could see the hordes of the undead, zombies, skeletons, and scavengers, crowding at the foot of the citadel. The armies of Darkness were gathering and preparing to surge onto Kaiber, as they would keep doing without respite in the centuries to come.

Intent on warning Kaiber about the imminent attack, the three turned back, but it was too late. Morbid angels watching the castle's surrounding had already spotted them. The necromancers' creatures set off after them in hot pursuit, and a wild chase began. The undead ceaselessly harassed the three soldiers as they ran through the barren landscape. Staying on the run, the three scouts did manage to bring down a few of their pursuers with their swords and arrows, but there were far too many of them. The morbid angels were playing with their nerves, falling back out of sight for a while only to crush their hopes by returning and attacking again. After a while, the three were covered with wounds, but they would not give up. The time came, however, when they had to stop moving. Egail was the first to drop from exhaustion; his legs would no longer carry him and he had no strength left to keep going. Without a word, he kneeled and stuck his last arrows in the ground around him. Then he picked up the first one, strung it, and waited. His companions understood he would not be able to go any further. They looked back one last time at the Lion before resuming their flight, and drew upon their last shreds of stamina to quicken their pace.

The archer's sacrifice gave them a measure of respite, but the undead picked up their trail and attacked them again when they were coming in sight of the fortress. The two survivors fought with the energy of despair. Morbid angels fell to their blows, but not before they could inflict grievous wounds themselves. Severian saw the elf fall, with the blade of a Dark one stuck in his shoulder. Despite the blood flowing in his eyes, the Griffin kept fighting. Soon he had only one opponent left, but then his sword broke against the scythe of the undead. The Dauntless threw himself down, grabbed Elnaë's pistol, and fired it at the morbid angel. The creature died instantly. The Akkylannian had never wielded a weapon of this kind, which were very rare at the time, but his instinct had guided him and he had fired with a sure and true hand. The shot had saved his life.

Severian bent over his companion and saw that he was still weakly breathing. So he heaved him on his shoulder and carried him over the last miles until Kaiber. As he had warned of the upcoming danger, the defence of the fortress was prepared in time, and Kaiber withstood a new attack by Darkness.

As he had saved his son's life, the commander of the Cynwalls offered Elnaë's pistol to Severian and taught him the handling of firearms. Thus did the secret of gunpowder come for the first time to the Griffins."

The legend had its appeal (Severian was a famous historical figure claimed, among others, by the thalions), but it did not explain the manner in which the Cynwalls had offered the gunpowder to the Griffins.

The gaze of Octave IX went toward a second and much more costly book. It had a finely gilded cover that bore the seal of the Order of the Divine Whispers. The nuns who belonged to this monastic order had the responsibility of compiling the history of Aarklash (and most specifically the history of Akkylannie) for the personal use of the emperors. The sisters being under a vow of silence, the only noise that could be heard inside their monasteries was the sound of the quills on vellum, that divine whisper so pleasing to the ear of the only god. The most glorious events, and the most secret ones as well, were committed to those few thousands pages of exquisite calligraphy. The emperor knew the volumes in their entirety, of course, but tonight he was interested in one particular instalment.

The text mentioned a meeting between the Guide of the elves from Lanever and the emperor of Akkylannie, approximately contemporaneous with the legend Octave had just read. The leaders of both peoples, with their respective escorts, had met in a hunting lodge lost in the woods to the south of Denda Cartho. Though the encounter was not recorded as being confidential, it still had a flavour of secrecy about it, and few people knew what had come of it. The two heads of state had exchanged their worried views about the troubled times Aarklash was going through, between the creation of the Sisterhood of Ashinân and that of Syharhalna, and they had dwelled on other mysteries.

On this occasion, the Guide had offered the Griffins the secret of gunpowder. He had given his Akkylannian allies several powder kegs, as well as many

firearms, pistols and rifles. He had also volunteered the services of a heliast in order to teach the Griffins how to handle this paraphernalia. 'A gift from a young nation to a young people,' the elf had told his human counterpart surprised by the magnitude of such an offering. Naturally, the emperor had lavished sumptuous gifts upon the Guide and his followers - finely crafted weapons and armour, and even several ashes from a phoenix - but nothing that could even remotely compare with the secret of gunpowder.

Nothing did truly explain why the Cynwälls had selected the Akkylannians to receive this priceless gift. Was it to help them hold the threatening alchemical empire at bay? Was it a token of trust meant to reinforce the union of their two peoples within the fledgling Alliance of Light? The historical text gave no hint. Besides, the Griffins and the Cynwälls were hardly the closest friends of each other. Indeed, nothing was farther removed from the words of wisdom of the Noesis than the credo of Merin upheld by the Inquisition. In addition, the two peoples shared very few and shallow ties, nothing that could compare to the common history that bound Akkylannie and Alahan, or the mutual understanding that explained the friendship between the Griffins with the dwarves of Tir-Nâ-Bor. Yet the Guide must have had unfathomable but compelling reasons to share that secret with them.

The Griffins had been swift to adapt and make the best of the gunpowder. Craftsmen, armourers and alchemists had worked tirelessly through the centuries to unveil the powder's every mystery. Actually, Octave did have a report from a friar who had done some personal research on the subject. His revelations were, to say the least, quite startling.

THE REPORT OF EYMERIUS ARTISAN-MONK FROM THE ORDER OF HIGHER-WERKS

"Entire generations of monks have tried to understand the mystery of the Cynwäll powder, to discover its origin and explain its operation. For centuries now, these researches have never allowed us to make a thorough analysis of this puzzling substance. Still, all these studies and observations have at least achieved a very significant progress: the creation of a functioning ersatz. For what we use nowadays in the vast majority of our weapons, from the long guns to the pistols, and what we trade with the Barhans or the mercenaries from the guild of Blades in Cadwallon, is in fact not this original powder we received from the elves. It is actually a substitute elaborated by the brothers, armourers and alchemists, of our order. It is a substance easy to produce, which possesses the detonating characteristics of the Cynwäll powder.

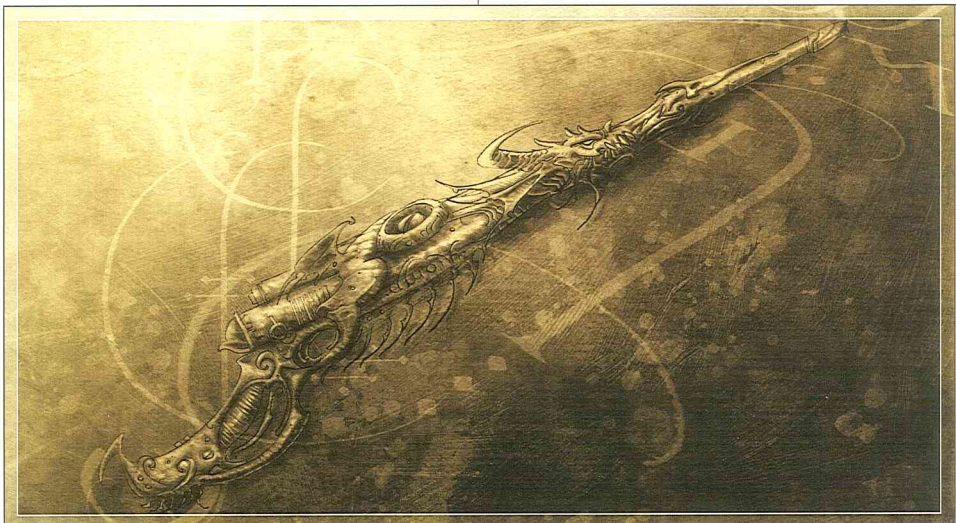
Because of its military and strategic import, the composition of this vulgar gunpowder is a well-kept

secret of our order. But though it allows our emperor to outfit his armies with a great number of firearms, it is beyond comparison with the noble gunpowder of the elves. First, the latter offers quite a few additional qualities not shared by the vulgar gunpowder. It is never corrupted by the contact of air, it will not deteriorate if exposed to water or the passing of time, and it never hangs fire. Perplexing phenomenon, it cannot ignite or explode accidentally. Anyone who has ever wielded a firearm loaded with this noble gunpowder will have noticed some aura of mystery. I know this report will remain secret and far from inquisitorial hands, so I will not cringe from sounding close to heresy as I confess that on many occasions I have suspected this noble gunpowder of having some sort of supernatural features. The strange impression felt by those who shoot a gun loaded with Cynwäll powder is the same one the heroes get when wielding their magical weapons. It appears obvious that this is not just a mundane weapon and that the powder is not just a vulgar matter.

This has long been only an intuition, but I now know what the reality behind it actually is. My research has forcibly driven me into dangerous ground; it has

thing akin to a very long hibernation) as they wait for the Cynwälls to find a way to wake them up. Who knows just how many of these creatures are currently sleeping in the depths of Lanever?"

Emperor Octave IX cautiously closed the scroll holding the report. Once more, his reading had kept him awake far into the night, and he had been unaware of the passing of time. The fire was now reduced to a few smouldering embers, and the candle was in its turn threatening to flicker out. Unperturbed by the dying light, the lord of Akkylannie remain deep in his reflections. The information provided by the artisan-monk seemed preposterous, but he had every reason to believe it was true. Octave owned a pistol, a magnificent weapon with a muzzle figuring a dragon's open jaws. Naturally, he loaded it only with noble gunpowder, the one offered by the Cynwälls to his ancestor a few centuries ago. And he had himself felt many times what the monk was talking about. The weapon seemed to react to emotions and communicate to its wielder its desire to fully participate in the fighting. The emperor had experienced the same feeling on other exceptional occasions, such as being exposed to a holy object, a relic that had



made me question the foundations and the dogmas of our order.

You have probably heard about the constructs, these mysterious "weapons" used by the Cynwälls. The origin of these automatons is lost in the mists of time. According to the last information I was able to gather on this subject, it seems the elves themselves have inherited the constructs from the ancient civilization of the Utopia of the Sphinx. You probably think, as most people do, that those are mere machines, with an admittedly quite complex operation, but simple machines nonetheless. They are no such things. As aberrant as it may seem, the constructs are intelligent mechanical creatures. When their metal shell is damaged beyond repair, they quickly disintegrate and their "decomposition" produces a fine black powder: the noble gunpowder of the Cynwälls. Most of these automatons are in a state of stasis (some-

belonged to Arcavius de Sabran, or standing close to the extinguished ashes of a powerful phoenix.

Octave IX rose from his seat, tormented by the most intense uncertainties. The Cynwälls had given the Griffins a precious secret, and they had turned it into a tool of war and domination. Yet the elves had never voiced a single protest about the use of their gift, even when the Akkylannian craftsmen had somehow corrupted it by creating the vulgar gunpowder. The Cynwälls had always renewed their alliance without laying down the least stipulation, without uttering the least word of reproach. However, a time was bound to come when they would remind the Griffins about the magnitude of their present. And on that day, Akkylannie had to stand ready to pay the price.

“

“In the stifling heat of a forge, the insistent rhythm of steel striking steel gives an answer to the hoarse puffing of the bellows stoking the fires. No light will reach this place from outside, but the fiery red glow of molten metal flowing into the moulds provides enough illumination to cast upsetting shadows on the soot-blackened walls. Massive silhouettes are ensconced in a millennial ritual, tirelessly repeating the motions of their ancestors. Through the blows of their hammers and the words of their incantations, they enslave the steel, bend it to their will, and turn it into the weapons of the dwarven people!”

”

OF FIRE AND STEEL

THE DWARVES OF TIR-NÂ-BOR ARE BEHELD WITH FEAR IN MANY BATTLEFIELDS. THEY HAVE ALSO EARNED THE RESPECT OF EVERY PEOPLE AND NATION INTERESTED IN THE NEW MILITARY PROWESS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE USE OF STEAM. THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS MEMBERS OF THIS ENGINEERING PEOPLE ARE PROBABLY THE BRILLIANT MINDS WHO COMPRISE THE BROTHERHOOD OF BRONZE.

Every dwarf city in Tir-Nâ-Bor holds at least one forge, and sometimes many more. Metalworking is undoubtedly the most precious heritage of the dwarves, for was it not the gods themselves who delivered this secret unto them?

Out of these countless forges, which provide day in and day out the weapons and armour to supply the fierce warriors of the Argg-Am-Ork, the most renowned is without any shadow of doubt the one in the city of Kâ-In-Ar, the fortress overlooking the plains west of the Aegis mountain range. Though it is not the greatest in size, it is the workshop of acknowledged masters in the arts of smithery, whose expertise is unequalled to this date.

Also conversant with the ways of Telluric magic, the master armorer Bâl-Khan and his younger brother Fenggar, dubbed “Iron Hand”, have founded

together one of the most widely respected institutions of Tir-Nâ-Bor: the Brotherhood of Bronze.

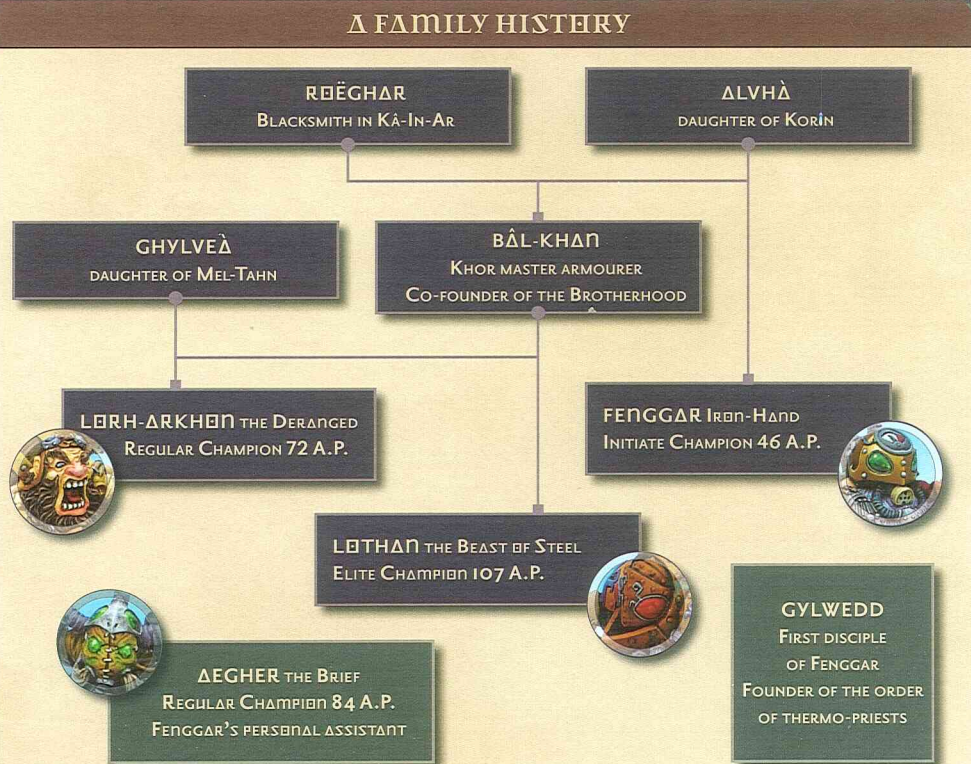
Forerunners in the field of steam, those two geniuses of metallurgy nonetheless had the hardest time carrying their pioneering ideas within the extremely conservative society of the dwarves. Their peers scoffed at their revolutionary theories regarding steel work and the integration of machinery into the traditional gear, and they spent a long time struggling against the narrow-mindedness and blind hostility toward innovation that was the hallmark of their illustrious predecessors. Despite all of this, one dwarf became wildly enthusiastic about their work, and his unwavering support changed the fate of his people. Mel-Tahn was his name, a name unjustly forgotten because it did not belong to a great warrior,



nor an Elder, nor even a mage or a priest. Mel-Tahn was only a simple merchant, a close friend of Bâl-Kan and Fenggar's family, who had grown prosperous with the salt trade and who put his fortune in the brothers' service. Throughout the long years, he maintained a constant interest for the research of his protégés, disregarding their failures and promoting their progresses. Irony of fate or tragic destiny, Mel-Tahn died before he could witness the triumph of the cause he had supported during his whole life. However, even as he lay dying, he never lost hope. As he left no descendants, he bequeathed all his fortune to Bâl-Khan, following the law of primogeniture. The brothers were deeply affected by the death of their benefactor, but the tragedy strengthened their resolve to go through with their research. At that time, they had managed to finalise the first prototypes of a steam cannon, but a fatal stroke of fate prevented them from winning over the trust of the council of Elders. Despite prior satisfactory testing, the first public display of their invention ended tragically when Fenggar, who was personally operating the machine for the demonstration, insisted he push the weapon to the top of its potential power, against his brother's opinion. The resulting boiler explosion disfigured Fenggar, tore off one of his arms, and left him paralysed in both legs. Worse yet, this "incident" reinforced the council of Elders' opinion that the steam engines were too unstable and prone to cause more death within the ranks of the dwarves using them than in those of their enemies.

The failure of their demonstration and above all the accident of his brother marked Bâl-Khan deeply. From then on, he slowly turned away from their basic research and spent more time creating pieces of armour, some of which are reckoned nowadays to be among the greatest treasures of the dwarven people. Fenggar, on the other hand, went back to work with an almost obsessive relentlessness. Some went as far as saying that his accident had not only made him a cripple, but also caused him to lose his mind. The day was fast coming, however, when Fenggar would show them he was far from crazy.

In the year 892 before the Dawn Ritual, a horde of goblins laid siege to the city of Bathral, on the plain below Kâ-In-Ar. This fortified city had already repelled many attacks by goblin plunderers in the past, but this time it was not just a pillaging raid. Supreme Imperator Absynium the First, one of the most short-lived and war-mongering emperors ever to ascend to the throne of Klûne, had decided to lead a bloody and merciless campaign against the cities of the dwarves. This time the attackers were ready for a full-fledged assault, and given their almost impossibly large numbers, the council of the city was considering the unthinkable: abandoning the city! Fenggar saw this as the long-awaited opportunity to prove the might of his inventions. In preparation for such



a situation, he had supervised since his accident the manufacture of several dozen steam cannons. Every day he had prayed for Bleddig to grant him the trial by fire, and the day had finally come. With the help of his faithful assistants and disciples, he had his whole paraphernalia carried on the battlements of Bathral as the green tide was preparing to rise against the walls. From this vantage, the crippled blacksmith harangued the warriors of the plains and provoked their pride by questioning their courage and their love of their land. When all was said and done, there was not a single dwarf unwilling to risk his life by handling one of the machines Fenggar had brought, if that could give them the slightest hope of driving the enemy back.

On that day, the gods unleashed a storm of fire and steel upon the goblins. A few valorous defenders did lose their lives in misfiring incidents, but the hell that broke loose over Absynium's army threw the assailants into an indescribable panic, paving the way to a typical No-Dan-Kar rout. Apart from parting Absynium from his throne and from his head, this failure of the great goblin invasion brought fame and recognition to Fenggar and his work. From then on, the arsenal of every city in Tir-Nâ-Bor began to include steam-powered weapons, whose uses have been unceasingly improved and diversified ever since.

Since the invention of steam technology, several other fellowships were created apart from the Brotherhood. A fellow called Gylwedd, one of Fenggar's first disciples, who was as well versed as his master in the magical arts, founded the order of the Thermo-Priests shortly after the triumph of Bathral.

The priests of Uren, who were the traditional protectors of blacksmiths, also opened their services to this new path, which came unsurprisingly to be regarded as a secret given to the dwarves by their tutelary gods.

Nonetheless, many adepts of these communities are also members of the Brotherhood of Bronze, though this allegiance is quite often kept secret. Thus does the Brotherhood keep an eye on the doings of Tir-Nâ-Bor's other societies, when it doesn't purely and simply control them in occult ways.

New recruits may be admitted into the Brotherhood through cooptation only. The order's hierarchy is designed in strata, with each layer associated to a level of accreditation. In this way, the technological mysteries of steam are disclosed only to the initiates of the higher layers, while the newly instituted apprentices must be content with carrying out the most menial tasks until they receive further promotion.

The last part of the Brotherhood is its armed branch, a militia that is split up into two separate corps.

The Forge Guardians, who are usually confined to watching over the workshops, the forges, and the warehouses, also provide bodyguard services for the Brotherhood's dignitaries.

The Thermo-Warriors and the knights of Uren, on the other hand, make up an elite corps of Khor warriors, recruited after a very strict selection process. These soldiers, who combine an exceptional mettle with state-of-the-art equipment, are widely known to be the most formidable defenders of Tir-Nâ-Bor in the present day.



FENGGAR IRON HAND

People say the line between genius and madness is so thin that one seldom goes without the other. Fenggar undoubtedly received a substantial amount of both.

As sons of a blacksmith, Fenggar and his elder brother Bâl-Khan spent their younger days inside the fabulous world of the smithies. Fascinated by the working of steel and even more by the astounding properties of alphas, Fenggar demonstrated at a very early age his inventive character. Additionally, and quite exceptionally among a people as traditionalist as the dwarves, he displayed a tendency to innovate. He owed this remarkable aspect of his personality in great part to his proclivity for magic. To his eyes, a forge is a living being, a gargantuan matrix covered with incandescent veins, which breathes to the rhythm of the bellows and furnaces. For a long time, Fenggar tried to control this spark of life and duplicate it... into a machine that would combine the toughness of steel with the powerful breath born out of the blaze. The outcome of his research on steam engines allowed Fenggar to give shape to his dreams, but to a limited extent only. The Iron Hand's ultimate goal was to create a being with its own free will, a golem with steam-processing steel lungs and molten metal for blood. Many called it the ramblings of a madman. Until Fenggar finalised the design of his mechanical familiar, that is. And the skeptics have seen nothing yet. Something bigger, really much bigger, has been born in secrecy deep within the workshops of the Brotherhood of Bronze...

LOR-ARKHON THE DERANGED

Some say he is even crazier than Fenggar, and that he must be his father in spirit, even though he actually is the son of Bâl-Khan. Just like their father and uncle before them, Lor-Arkhan and his youngest brother Lothan have grown inside the forge and learned metalworking at a very young age. Yet while his younger brother seemed more interested in the martial uses of his uncle's inventions, Lor-Arkhan soon demonstrated the same inventive fever that was associated with Fenggar. However, his passion remained confined to pure mechanics, and most specifically to everything involving artillery. This fascination with weapons of substantial destruction has something frightful about it, and it has proved to be a social deterrent with the people around him. This has gone to such an extent that Lor-Arkhan now seems burdened with a dual personality. Whenever he is working on his inventions, he is introverted and taciturn, locking himself up in his workshop for days on end and refusing to talk to anyone but Fenggar. However, when the time comes to field-test his new designs in a combat situation, his face changes and abundantly demonstrates how he deserved his nickname, for his destructive rage is a remarkable if frightening sight. In those moments, it would be easy to believe that the scalding steam expelled from the boiler directly enters his veins, turning him into a living machine of flesh and steel!

LETHAN THE BEAST OF STEEL

Though impetuosity and destructiveness characterise his elder brother, Lothan himself may best be defined through self-control and discipline. His passion for the world of the forges has expressed itself very differently than it did in the other members of his family. Though he received an early initiation into the working of steel, Lothan never had any real taste for it, and he never proved to be outstandingly gifted and inventive either. His interest has always been focused on the finished product. While he was only a very young dwarf, he used to stare for hours on end at the armour and the autonomous combat suits designed by his father and his uncle, dreaming about how he would use them himself someday to accomplish great feats for the defence of Tir-Nâ-Bor and the glory of his family. As he grew up, Lothan confirmed his calling as a warrior, and his impressive martial prowess allowed him to become one of the youngest recruits in the prestigious company of the Khor warriors. Back then, his ambition was to earn in time the command of the city's troops. After his uncle's terrible accident, however, the humiliation that followed the rejection of Fenggar's lifework persuaded him to return to his family. He then founded the corps of Thermo-warriors by recruiting young and reckless dwarves who were ready to risk everything. Since then, the order has earned a reputation that outshines the Khor warriors themselves, and many among them now dream of donning the steam-powered armoured suit, the symbol of the Thermo-warriors.

AEGHER THE BRIEF

Born of a humble family, Aegher long had to suffer the gibes of his companions about his small size. This endless browbeating nevertheless helped in framing his character, and once he had reached adulthood, he vowed that no one would ever make fun of him again, and that every slight would be washed away in blood and broken teeth. His bad temper, his pugnacity, and his resolute mind earned him a position as sergeant in the private troops of Mel-Tahn, a rich merchant who financed the research of Bâl-Khan and Fenggar. It was by means of Mel-Tahn that Aegher was incorporated in the Brotherhood of Bronze later on, as a forge-guardian senior officer and the head of workshop security.

Though he had never previously approached the world of forges, he developed a passion for the works of his new master. As he was both smart and gifted with considerable practical common sense, Aegher gradually became Fenggar's personal assistant.

Obligation and gratitude are not pointless words for Aegher, and his devotion to his new family knows no bounds. Therefore, when duty calls the Brotherhood to battle, he assumes the leadership of the troops, since Lothan had rather forego the command to devote himself entirely to the joy of combat. Perched on a huge and fierce razorback, Aegher proudly raises the banner of the Brotherhood, and woe to anyone who would dare to laugh at him then!

FENGGAR IRON HAND



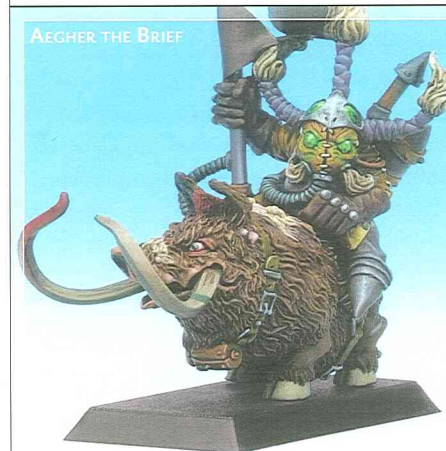
LOR-ARKHON THE DERANGED



LETHAN THE BEAST OF STEEL



AEGHER THE BRIEF



May we really speak of technology to characterise the engines of destruction used by the dwarves of Mid-Nor?

These formidable weapons seem influenced by the steam engines of Tir-Nâ-Bor, but this is only a deceptive similarity prone to mislead the novice observer into drawing hasty conclusions. Actually, the machines of the Despot's minions are as far removed from the creations of the dwarves as the latter are from their grotesque demoniac caricatures.

Contrarily to the noble art of the forge, the creation of weapons by the dwarves of Mid-Nor does not rely on conventional techniques of metallurgy; no smith or crucible are to be found here, and no mould or anvil either. The ritual of transfiguration begins with a simple piece of unrefined ore, still trapped in its gangue of earth and impurities.

The officiating sorcerer begins by engraving a string of occult symbols all over this "matrix" before he anoints it with blood to draw the attention of the demons from the other-world. This is followed by several series of incantations. The first ones are intended to summon the appropriate demon and anchor him to this plane of existence as well as to the physical substance of the matrix. This is the most delicate step, for even though

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“Under the high vaults of the Fom-Nur fortress, the metallic litanies of the forges resounds and echoes into infinity against the walls of stone. The rock itself holds a trace of that echo and propagates it to the depths below the ground.

Thus does the ringing of hammers striking metal travel to the bowels of the earth, where it eventually dies in the apotheosis of a final clamour, amplified by a natural cavern. Sometimes, it meets and mixes with other echoes whose regular rhythms seem to match its own. These distressing sounds are reminiscent of voices... voices from another world, cruel voices whose tones are at times imploring, and at times domineering.

In this place, the song of the forges of Tir-Nâ-Bor meets the song of the lictors of Mid-Nor, who fashion the weapons of Evil in clod and blood.”

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DEMONIC TECHNOLOGY

CORRUPTED BY THE DEMONS WHO POSSESS THEM, THE DWARVES OF MID-NOR NEVERTHELESS REMAIN PRAGMATIC AND BOLD INVENTERS. THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS ARE AN ARTFUL BLEND OF MAGIC AND MECHANICS, LED BY THE SAME CONCERN FOR EFFICIENCY THAT CHARACTERISES THEIR ENEMY BRETHREN OF TIR-NÂ-BOR.



the lictor is himself the material vessel of a demon, the confrontation with one of his own may promptly degenerate into open conflict should the summoned entity prove to be insubordinate and too powerful to be disciplined. In that case, the lictor risks not only physical destruction, but also banishment to another plane.

Once the demon is properly bound, other incantations compel it to fashion the matrix according to the sorcerer's wishes. The ore is bent out of shape, separated from the undesirable elements, and gives rise to the required weapon. In most cases the demon is freed afterwards, since the power of the lictor is insufficient to compel the entity permanently. Powerful sorcerers will, however, sometime join forces to summon and bind permanently one demon, or even several demons,

to an object whose size and usefulness warrants such a lavish expenditure of energy and the danger incurred. These diabolical machines are as rare as they are formidable, for they possess a self-governing consciousness and an unequalled destructive fury.

In a more anecdotal manner, this kind of process is also used from time to time to endow a servant of the Despot with a mechanical prosthesis to replace one or more missing limbs. The operation is far less hazardous for the lictor, since the demon used for the transfiguration of the ore is none other than the host of the damaged body. Nevertheless, even though the host is usually willing to help, the ritual still demands that magic be used, and so the attendance of a lictor is necessary.



THE TRAVEL JOURNALS OF CYANELITH

THE INVENTIVENESS AND THE TASTE FOR EXCESSIVENESS OF THE GOBLINS ARE EXPRESSED AS INTENSELY IN WARFARE AS THEY ARE IN PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT. EVERY YEAR, KLÛNE, THE CAPITAL CITY OF NO-DAN-KAR, HOSTS ONE OF THE EVENTS MOST APPRECIATED BY THE CHILDREN OF RAT: THE NAPHTHA-POWERED MONOCYCLE GRAND PRIX.

In the eyes of the true aesthete, the borderline-bad-taste luxury of the palaces of Alahan, the extravagant hanging gardens of Wyde, even the overbearing cathedrals of Arcavia are unable to compare with the city of the greatest kings and emperors who have ever walked this earth: Klûne.

Klûne the beautiful, Klûne the magnificent, cradle of a whole civilization, centre of culture and scholarship where the most brilliant artists and scientists mingle, those whose immeasurable genius has inspired so many plagiarists among our neighbours the elves, dwarves, and humans. But contrarily to these underdeveloped peoples who wallow in the mediocrity sustained by the smugness of their so typical self-satisfaction, the inventiveness and perfectionism characteristic of the goblins constantly drive my fellow creatures to push back the limits of the possible.

In this regard, the engineers of Klûne's R&D pit their genius against one another every year in a tournament that constitutes the climax of the festivities in honour of Emperor Isothop.

It is indisputably one of the most popular events of the year, possibly on an equal footing with the harvesting of the phosphorescent mushrooms.

The population of the city may increase fourfold over a few days for the occasion, so true is it that no self-respecting goblin would miss such a festival. Spectators flock in from every nook and cranny in No-Dan-Kar, and sometimes from much farther away, to see the fights of the golems and the gladiators in S.M.A.S.H.⁽¹⁾ armour, as well as the dwarf-slapping automaton contest.

Still, the naphtha-powered monocycle Grand Prix of Klûne always remains the most prized attraction. During this free-for-all race, the best pilots clash in a merciless struggle to secure the envied title of champion of the universe. The one who wins the cup becomes a living god in the eyes of the people... and is additionally gratified with a reward of no less than 500,000 Klûs⁽²⁾.

That year, well, I had resolved that the prize money should end up in my pocket.

As I was growing tired of all the trudging on every road over the continent, and of constantly risking my life for a mere handful of Klûs, I had decided to treat myself to one sedentary year in Klûne. That decision taken, I had grown convinced to take advantage of the time and carry out an old snotling's dream: to set up my own monocycle racing team. Thanks to a few very beneficial investment returns, I had enough funds at my disposal to acquire a machine and secure the services of Methanol, one of the most renowned mechanics in the city. Finding a pilot was not a very difficult task, as it is very true that pilots seeking glory (as well as a vehicle) are legion in Klûne. However, finding a pilot who had actually ever set his bottom down in the bucket seat of a monocycle was a different issue altogether, as it is equally true that those who claim to be pilots in No-Dan-Kar have on average as much experience with piloting as the duke of Cadwallon has with knitting. Eventually, I dug up one, who answered to the name Gazhoil, and who assured me he had once stood less than two yards away from a monocycle.

So I spent several months monitoring the training of my protégé, and I was constantly shouting for joy over his stunning progress. You might not believe it, but it took him barely a month to figure out how to start the engine, and then, less than fifteen days later, he did manage to shift gears... devastating in the process about three quarters of the stalls in the Klûne marketplace. Nevertheless, I saw the hundred yards he covered that day as a good omen for things to come. Oh, what wonders he might have achieved if he had been going forward!

On the eve of the race, I was so confident in the abilities of my pilot that I decided to conscientiously eliminate every challenger who might prove to be an impediment on the road to victory. That means all of them, except for old Fôshill, a former champion who has gone blind but still competes every year in the Grand Prix. Out of sheer goodwill, and because

it gets a good laugh from the audience, they stick him on a monocycle that is put on blocks, and in the end they make him believe he won again.

First, I sent Face-Smasher on a sabotage mission to the other teams, telling him to unscrew anything he could find sticking out. Then, a few minutes after he had gone, I began to have doubts and I went after him. Don't be mistaken: I was mainly afraid I had not been specific enough, and this feeling was proven right when I happened upon my dear Face-Smasher in the process of unscrewing the head of the pilot from the imperial team.

First conclusion: never send a brontops to pick a bunch of wild flowers.

Second conclusion: if you want something done right, do it yourself.

Later that evening, I immersed myself back into my old apothecary lessons in order to cook up a small potion with laxative properties, of the kind that is normally only used on the most highly-strung minotaurs before they enter the arenas in Cadwallon.

Then, after a quick visit to the pilots' refectory, I headed for the bookmakers' corner where, instead of just making a dumb bet on a sure victory, I endeavoured to take care of my public relations by giving away a golden tip to the Viscount, the boss of the most influential mob in Klûne. To have such a character indebted to you for a few favours is often much more valuable than a bagful of Klûs.

From then on, nothing could rob me of victory. No opponent would be able to complete the race without at least a dozen pit stops. I only had to strap Gazhoil tightly to his monocycle, and categorically forbid him from going any faster than 80 feet per hour.

The thing is, the next morning when they called the pilots, no sign of Gazhoil. What a blow...

In a panic, I sent Methanol to look for him. He came back a few minutes later, pinching his nose. Apparently, Gazhoil thought he had stumbled upon my private stash of cactus alcohol, and had downed the whole second bottle of the concoction I had reserved for the other pilots.

⁽¹⁾ Special Mechanically Assisted Smack Hardener

⁽²⁾ Klû: official currency in No-Dan-Kar since the reign of Emperor Karboxhyl; it is pronounced "clue".

"You'll need to change the carpet in the tent, boss," Methanol concluded.

The worst had happened!

A brand new carpet... No, I'm just kidding.

No pilot meant no race. No race meant no victory. No victory meant not a Klû. And worst of all, the Viscount would be very displeased with the rotten bratskin tip I had slipped him. Beyond the possibility of a dead loss, this was becoming a matter of actual life and death. I needed a pilot, and I needed one fast. I turned to Methanol. The little nit-picker had felt the wind change and had done a bunk. No way I was going to drive the thing myself, I was too old for this kind of rubbish. Face-Smasher? Too heavy. I raised an eyebrow and turned to Grimace.

Have I told you about Grimace yet? Grimace, he's my ape. A fine-looking ape. And clever as well. Clever as a... well, as an ape, in any case.

To cut a long story short, he did look dashing in coveralls and with his helmet on. I led him to the starting line, where the other pilots were already swaying uncomfortably in their bucket seats, clenching their teeth. Behind them to the left, Fôshill had been settled on the finishing line, so that he would not impede the start of the race.

Trying to look inconspicuous, I strapped Grimace in, clenched the brake, and wedged down the accelerator. When the gunfire resounded to mark the start of the race, I unclenched the brake and sent a quick prayer to the god of the apes, whoever that might be...

Grimace shot off like a cannonball. So did the other pilots. The Grand Prix was off to a magnificent start. Until the exit of the first curve, that is, when Grimace kept going straight ahead while every other pilot slammed on the brakes to enter the pits at the same time. Meanwhile, two people shook Fôshill's monocycle as a third one was holding some kind of turbine in front of him, and a fourth one threw gravel in his face. Still convinced he knew the lap by heart, the old-timer was sharply attacking the curbs.

In the first turn, Grimace kept going so straight that the public roared with admiration. His wheel bumped into the straw bales and flew off, in exactly the right direction. I still don't know by what miracle he kept going, but he did fall back on the track after a dozen somersaults in the air. And he even managed to hold his breakfast through all this, if you please! After this, he somehow got the hang of steering.

A few pilots tried to resume the race, but they had to stop again before they even completed a single turn. It was a done deal; Grimace had the best of it and he would finish the race in the lead.

While he was completing the last lap, I watched him come toward me with tears in my eyes. My Grimace! I waved him on encouragingly.

And then, he waved back... and suddenly lost control of the monocycle, which went into a spin. It started turning on itself like a top, while still edging forward.



A few feet from the finishing line, it veered left and crashed into the back of Fôshill's wreck. Grimace ended up in the straw and Fôshill won his last Klûne Grand Prix...

As for me, I have been hiding for the last six months

in the gullies of Bran-Ô-Kor, where my old buddy Carbone offered me shelter, and I hope to give the Viscount enough time to forget about me. Business is picking up again, however: Grimace has improved his time in the brontops race today...

The forest of Caer Maed stands to the north of the plain of Avagddu, and it is one of the wildest and most feared places of all the continent of Aarklash. The area is under the rule of the Drones, but their underground cities remain hidden from those who are unaware of their existence. Yet there are many signs of their presence scattered throughout the cursed woods. Gruesome warnings, severed heads, bodies rotting on spikes to remind the intruders that they will find only pain and suffering in this place. These fearsome symbols are, however, completely harmless themselves. Such is not the case for the dark standing stones that rise haphazardly in the dim light of the undergrowth.

The Drones call these basalt megaliths *gwàth nèarh*, which literally means “stones of blood.” And beyond the symbolism they bear, these stones conceal a terrifying secret. Seen from afar, they seem to hold no particular feature, apart from an indefinite feeling of unease that grasps the unfortunates who remain too long contemplating them. This sensation grows inexorably as one gets closer to the stones, and culminates when the stench and the palpable aura of suffering and terror that surrounds them becomes unbearable. From up close, a blood almost as dark as the basalt itself can be seen continually oozing from the inscriptions engraved on their otherwise smooth surface.

The Drones are known to be merciless torturers. Though this reputation is more than justified, few people are actually aware of the reasons and the significance of such cruelty.

As part of their fight against the gods, the Drones have chosen to deal with their servants. From this mainspring, their wretched rituals serve a double purpose. First, their terrifying reputation begets fear in the hearts of their enemies. Second, and above all, the pain they inflict on the believers weakens the deities themselves and their hold on the world of the mortals.

What even fewer people suspect is that the torture perpetrated by the Drone wyrds on their captives are far from over when the victim dies. For even as the pitiless sorcerers use magic to extend their victims' agony, they also use the same rituals to bind their very souls. The stones of blood are the receptacles carrying the bound souls through an eternity of suffering.

Though they seem scattered randomly throughout the forest of Caer Maed, the megaliths are actually set out according to a precise design. They form two opposed spirals, the centre of the first one being Drun-Aeryfh, the Invisible City, while the second circles away from Gwyrd An Caern, the Drone necropolis. Both spirals are of course a symbol of the Drones' will to expand their dominion beyond the edge of the Black Woods.

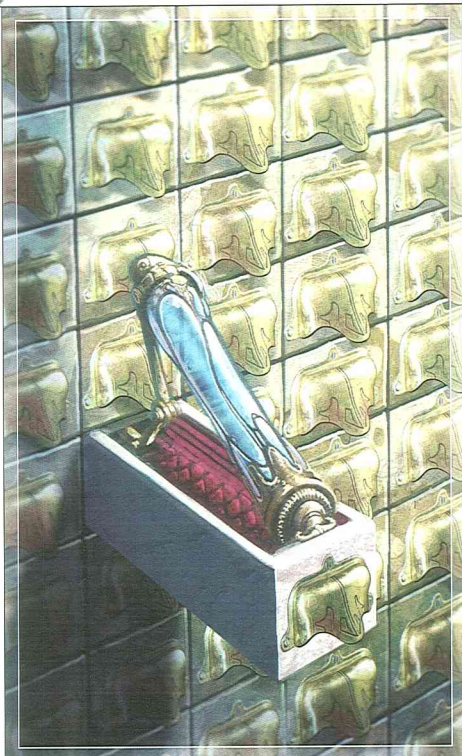
THE BLEED AND THE STONE



The stones may, however, be moved by the Drones themselves when the need arises. The wyrd shamans who have bound the spirits of the dead to the basalt also have the power to set them free from the stones. But in the way of release, those pain-wracked souls already driven to insanity by the abuse they have born through life and beyond death may expect

only another form of slavery. Bent to their torturers' will, they crystallise through the Dark Principle and become terrifying orbs of destruction. The Drones sometimes go as far as carrying a few stones of blood onto a battlefield, so that the wyrd shamans may use them to sow death and panic among the ranks of their enemies.





The growth rate of embryo SI-09 was amazing. Its weight and size had increased threefold within four days. At this pace, Syrkiz would soon be able to proceed with the graft of the back plates and the strengthened joints that would allow SI-09 to compete with the last specimens designed by Zaryf Nhadak. He was proud of his creation. Athan Zakhil would reward him for his zeal and grant him additional means. The doors to glory, riches, and power were opening for him at last.

Lost in his daydreams, exhausted by the long hours of wakefulness, Syrkiz neglected to check one last time the operation of the machines. He hardly even perceived the light buzzing sound that emanated from the top of the vat. The gem of Darkness that provided its energy to the accelerated-growth apparatus no longer had any effect. The mana had stopped irrigating the vat, and the SI-09, oblivious to its adverse fortune, was beginning to waste away.

Syrkiz eventually turned back, intent on checking that his "child", as he sometimes found himself referring to it, was still growing. Something was clearly amiss. The embryo's limbs seemed withered and small vessels had burst around its protuberant eyes. It was floating, motionless, in the nutrient fluid. Syrkiz dashed to the control panel. With trembling hands, he worked some levers and frantically fiddled with the switches. By the time he finally understood where the problem came from, it was already too late. A powerful convulsion shook the whole body of SI-09, and its tiny heart stopped beating.

Petrified with dread, Syrkiz witnessed the swift decay of the dead body, an ominous prelude to his own downfall that nothing would be able to prevent from now on.

Δ SCIENCE FROM ΔFΔR

THE DAWN RITUAL HAS TURNED THE VEIL, AND THE ALCHEMICAL LEGIONS OF THE HEIRS OF DIRZ ARE PREPARING TO SURGE UPON ΔARKLASH. THE HERETIC SCIENCE THAT ONCE SWAYED ΔKKYLANNIE HAS MATURED IN THE BEWELS OF SHAMIR; AND WHAT USED TO BE ONLY A BLASPHEMOUS THEORY HAS BECOME A GENUINE TECHNOLOGY IN THE SERVICE OF AN EMPIRE GONE ASTRAY.

“

“The source is the code.
The code begets the strains.
The branches sprout from the strains.
Saw off the branches
to reveal the strains.
Pierce the strains to extract the code.
Tame the code and
the power to create shall be yours.”

Extract from
Doctrine of the Heresiarch

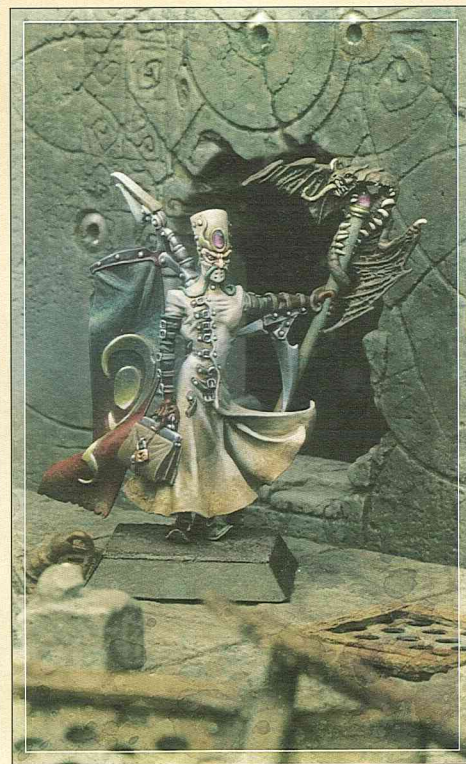
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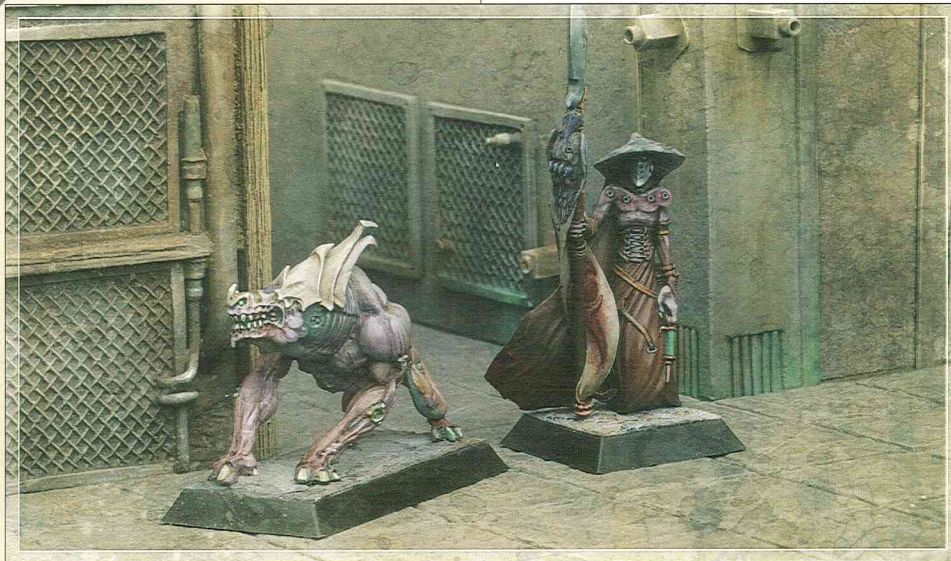
THE LEGACY OF DIRZ

Dirz taught his disciples that nature is nothing more than a machine, a constantly operating laboratory used by the gods as they tried to create a perfect life form. Minerals and living being of all kinds are nothing but experiments. They all originate from the same unique material, which is itself made up from a limited number of elements that may be combined in an infinite number of ways. Stone and flesh are only variants, declensions of the same substance. The true discrimination between a dog and an elf does not come from their differences in morphology or intelligence; what really sets them apart is the code from which they were fashioned.

The Heresiarch thought that matter could be modelled like clay, and that the creative power of the gods was within the grasp of men. He dreamed of discovering the ultimate code, the one that would allow him to create a perfect being, the terrestrial incarnation of a divine absolute. In his opinion, such a quest was not an offence to the celestial powers; it was a true act of faith. Those who would be able to create perfection would become the chosen ones, favoured by the gods. They would obtain immortality as a reward for their zeal, and they would reign undividedly over Aarklash until the end of time.

Dirz taught his students the art of manipulating matter and breathing life into it. He showed them how to





extract the strains and how to alter them in order to obtain new ones. Thus, while Shamir was becoming the centre of a new empire, the alchemists and their guide initiated the most ambitious research programme in all the history of Aarklash. They created the first generations of clones and put them to work without losing any time. The True-born, those who had not risen from the vats designed by the Heresiarch, helped their mentor with the improvement of the equipment and the experimental protocols. Despite various failures and setbacks, the Scorpions did multiply and pursue their studies ever further, until the departure of Dirz.

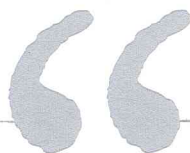
Ever since the fall of the first Shamir, the Syhars have tried to complete the Heresiarch's work. Under the guidance of their god, Arh-Tolth, they have built a conquering empire and discovered countless secrets. However, their creative madness has not yet given birth to the perfect being, the one Dirz used to refer to as Alpha.



ALCHEMICAL PROCEDURES

THE STRAINS

Though the code is, in some way, a recipe that gives instructions to cook up a given variation of matter, it is in fact not possible to use it as it is. In order to be able to make use of a code, it is imperative to have at one's disposal its physical vessel: the strain. This will in fact come in the form of a sample, which may be stored, analysed,



"Adding strain SMO-234-B to the old matrix has proved to be a judicious idea. The next series of Keratis will undoubtedly be an astonishing success.

These encouraging results have allowed us to save precious time in the finalisation of an alternative series. The replicas obtained from that second matrix will inherit the aggressiveness of tigers and be able to wield two weapons simultaneously. We have also succeeded in reducing the period of gestation, so the first adult subjects will be available before the end of the month."

Extract from the diary of an anonymous technomancer



and combined with other "extracts" in order to create a new code.

The strains make up a fundamental material for the works of the alchemists of Dirz. Nothing would be possible without them. Their worth is directly proportional to their rarity, and some strains, sampled by the Heresiarch himself in obscure unfinished Realms, receive better protection than the basyleus himself!

The strains are kept in airtight containers and stowed at a constant temperature in cold storage rooms the Syhars call gene-libraries.

There is a very elaborate classification system for the strains, which takes into account the origin, rarity, level of complexity, as well as the time of sampling. Most of the samples, even the most precious ones, may be cloned (and thus identically duplicated). This explains why the Scorpions view the gene-libraries as places of an almost sacred nature, and it vindicates the paranoia of the technomancers towards their own colleagues and competitors.

THE BIOPSISTS

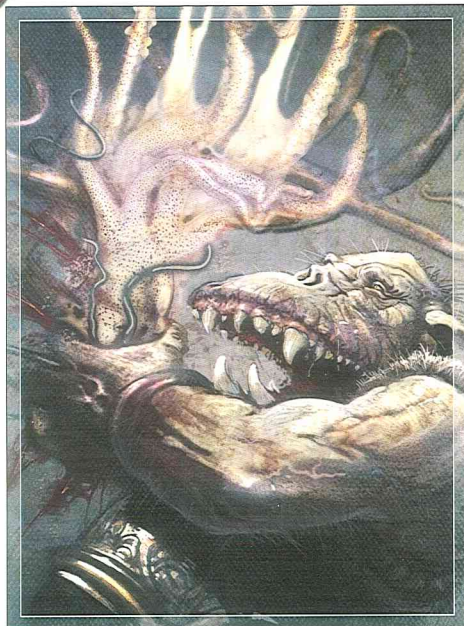
Specialists in the collection of samples, the biopsists are sent far and wide across Aarklash and elsewhere to find all sorts of strains to collect and bring back. Contrarily to the Androctis clones that focus on one particular target and act as true hunters, the biopsists gather the strains in very large numbers, usually on the battlefields. This activity requires self-control and resolve, as well as an extensive and comprehensive training.



THE CLONES

Back in the time of the Heresiarch, the beings obtained through genetic manipulation were separated in two distinct categories: the replicas (identical and line-produced specimens) and the prototypes (unique and usually more complicated specimens). The embryos belonging to the first category were systematically put in accelerated growth vats, and their life expectancy was limited to a few years at best. The prototypes, on the other hand, benefited from certain privileges. Most of the time they went through an intrauterine gestation, received an education worthy of the name, and were treated much more humanely than the replicas.

Nowadays, the two categories still exist, but the language of the Scorpions has evolved. The word "clone" has progressively asserted itself and the former names have both fallen into disuse. This linguistic simplification reflects the deep transformation of Syhar society. The True-born are now a powerful minority that rules over legions of replicas and prototypes whose characterisation has become superfluous. A few rare clones who are extremely brilliant (or well-protected by their creators), like Sasia Samaris, may achieve a high social status. A few others are specifically designed to fill a precise function (Razheem



the Insane was created to be a Commodore, for instance). Yet, whether they are unique or mass-produced, all the clones live under the merciless yoke of the True-born, who take great care to ensure their creations are all sterile and unable to revolt like the orcs did.

“

“When the Heresiarch returns to his people, he shall look upon his lineage and recognise the chosen ones.

Those born out of the union of flesh will suffer banishment in the desert, and the children of the vats will reign beside their emperor.

Then will the Heresiarch and his people fashion the Pure, under the benevolent gaze of Arh-Tolth.”

Inscription engraved on the wall of a confinement cell occupied by an imperfect

”

CLONING

This term is used both for the process allowing the duplication of a strain, and for the complete engineering procedure that results in the production of one or several specimens.

In order to create clones, a technomancer needs to have access to a reference strain called a matrix. Once inserted in a reproducer (a machine supplied in energy by gems of Darkness), the matrix allows the said machine to generate, after a short period of maturation, a series of identical embryos. Afterwards, these embryos are placed in incubators, and later on in accelerated-growth vats (alternatively, a clone embryo may be inserted inside a real womb, either human or not).

Once the gestation period is over, the adult clone is hauled out of the nutrient fluid and entrusted to the neuromancers who will be in charge of his education. As for the specimens who are delivered from a womb, they are raised by their creator or by a True-born specially trained for this task.

Some kinds of clones receive implants and grafts meant to improve their performance. In these cases, the surgical operations are performed after the completion of growth, and they are usually irreversible. Some combat clones are given additional limbs, while others are armoured in metal plates covered with spikes. Another possibility of the cloning technology, for the technomancers with the best equipment, is to create “spare parts”: purpose-specific organic tools that can be kept ready for transplantation or grafting on any specimen when the need arises.

THE TREATMENTS

The science developed by the alchemists of Dirz does not confine itself only to the growing of clones. The codes encrypted in the strains are also used to produce compounds, also known as mutagenic treatments. These chemical substances induce alterations in the genetic structure of living beings, usually for a limited time. Some may increase an individual's strength; others may modify the bone structure, raise the pain threshold or the resistance to trauma, create gills, etc. There are as many possible effects as there are different codes. Some compounds can temporarily give their user the natural abilities, including the instincts, of a given creature. This explains why there is such a demand for Wolfen strains among the Scorpions.

Most treatments come under the guise of liquid solutions, which can be injected either intravenously or intramuscularly. They are thus very simple to use, and may be employed at any time and under any circumstances. The combat clones often have such substances at their disposal, in order to treat themselves for additional efficiency when confronted with difficult situations.

Under a high concentration of Darkness, some compounds cause irreversible mutations. The design of a few special clones incorporates the use of such compounds in the growth process. Those compounds are, however, very rare, and the very highest alchemical skill is required to perfect them.



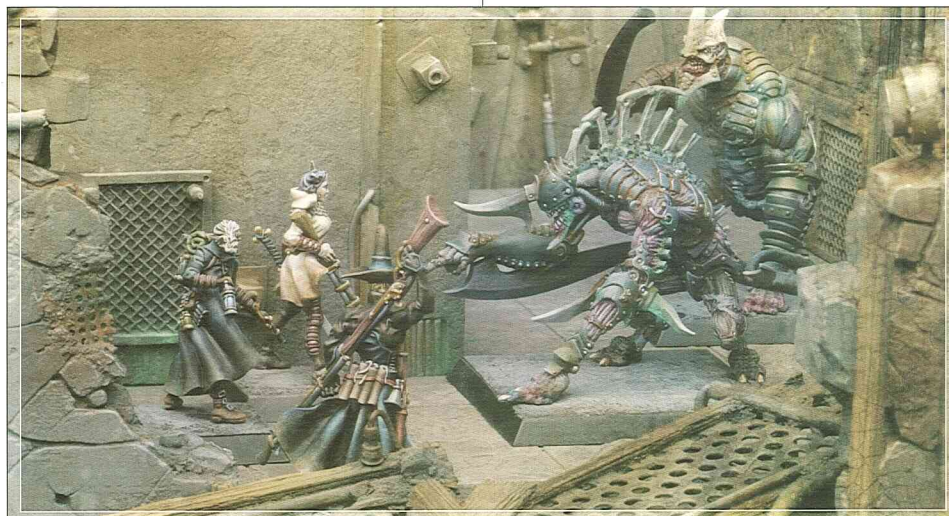
THE FUTURE

The recent discovery of ancient laboratories hidden far and wide across Aarklash has caused a significant stir among the ruling class of the Scorpions. Apparently, these facilities had all been built before the fall of the first Shamir, under the Heresiarch's direct supervision. Teams have been dispatched to repatriate the files left by the Omnimancers who resided in these laboratories, and to retrieve the content of the places' gene-libraries. Some of these places have even gone back into operation. It seems now clear that Dirz himself took charge of the research carried out in these facilities. Their objective was indisputably the discovery of the ultimate code.

THE HYBRID PROJECT

This is a substantial experiment programme launched by the Heresiarch before his disappearance. Everyone forgot about the laboratories of the Hybrid Project after the fall of the first Shamir, and their dwellers, locked up for security reasons, eventually passed away in the most complete isolation.

The main objective of the Hybrid Project was to test new strains for more ambitious endeavours. Some locations, such as the SOIII laboratory, commanded secret outbuildings set aside for the development of a new kind of assassin clone: the Nemesis.



THE ALPHA PROJECT

This project has remained a mystery to this day. Athan Zakhil is the only Scorpion who has understood that there was a link between the Hybrid Project and the Alpha Project, but he is unaware of its nature. Venerable Ambrosius from the Lodge of Hod also possesses this information, and he is actively trying to locate the site the Heresiarch had chosen to lead this research personally. For this is what it is in reality. The Alpha Project actually seems to be the Heresiarch's pet project, the study of the ultimate code to produce the perfect being.

Syrkiz felt like his throat had been swept by the coarse winds of the Syharhalna. The monstrous body of Athan Zakhil seemed cramped for room in the devastated laboratory. He offhandedly trampled the labour of his whole life. His massive arms had methodically broken every vat and retort. The work of Syrkiz had disappeared within minutes, swept away by the fury of the monster.

When the Dasyatis turned around, revealing the frail creature emerging from its abdomen, Syrkiz understood that his end was nigh. Athan Zakhil pointed a bony finger at him, and immediately the enormous body that hosted his feeble frame lunged forward...



THE DELUSION
OF EVOLUTION

Extract from the work
Kel, or the Origins of a Civilisation⁽¹⁾
by Doctor Abronsius,
Dean of the Royal University of Kallienne.

By comparison with the perceptible level of technological progress in most human societies on the continent of Aarklash, the obvious backwardness of the Kelt clans in this regard seems at first a puzzling abnormality. Indeed, if we proceed from the knowledge that the Barhans, the Akkylannians, and the Syhars all stem from the same people as the Kelts of the plains, then how are we to explain that they (as well as the Drones to the east) have remained at such a technological standstill?

Admittedly, the most important technological improvements for the above-mentioned communities were in fact not discoveries they made themselves; the secret of gunpowder was entrusted to the Akkylannians by the Cynwäll elves, and the origin of the astonishing technology used by the alchemists of Dirz remains a mystery to this day. But the discrepancies are not limited to the field of weapons, and the gap is in fact widest as regards architecture and urban development. Whereas the Barhans and the Akkylannians build awe-inspiring cities, and while the Syhars raise their disturbing ziggurats towards the sky, the clans of the plains are still dwelling in small villages made of tents or huts of cob. At best do they huddle together in small "fortified" cities, whose actual protection is usually reduced to a small earth mound, heightened by a wooden palisade.

A few scholars, theorists of racial evolution, have submitted the hypothesis of a congenital defect common to these ethnic groups, and brandished it as an explanation for their backwardness. This assumption is, of course, as preposterous as it is simplistic, for it appears clearly that the possible explanations for this state of affairs will be found on a cultural level, and more precisely a religious one.

The clans of the plains are the last worshippers of Danu, the goddess who created all life, and her three daughters the Matrae each of whom embodies one essential aspect of the relationship the Kelts have with the world: fertility, war, and death.

These three symbols are specifically the cause of the rejection of technology, and above all of the implications of technology, by these so-called primitive tribes.

First of all, the Sessairs, as well as the other minor clans that also perpetuate the worship of Danu, respect the earth and nature as though it were the very body of their goddess. A whole gamut of religious interdicts stems from this belief and very strictly regulates the behaviour of individuals in society. Without

THE
TECHNOLOGY-
RESISTANT PEOPLES

SIRE,

THE LETTER RECEIVED THIS MORNING FROM AMEL KARAN ALLOWED ME TO COMPLETE THE HARVESTING OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE PEOPLES OF AARKLASH THAT EITHER RESIST ACTIVELY OR ARE INDIFFERENT TO TECHNOLOGY. THE ATTACHED DOCUMENTS ARE COPIES OF MANUSCRIPTS CHIMING MOSTLY FROM THE GREAT LIBRARY OF WYDE AND THE ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF KALLIENNE. THEY ARE SUCCINCT, BUT REASONABLY COMPREHENSIVE.

I REMAIN AT YOUR DISPOSAL SHOULD YOU NEED ANY FURTHER PARTICULARS.

YOURS DEVOTEDLY, DEHAN ERKHAN

going into full details, the main idea is to avoid as much as possible the harming of earth and nature. In this regard, any substantial alteration of the environment is deemed to be a sacrilege. This is why there is so little farming among the Kelts, who rely mostly on hunting to meet their needs, and who take from the herds of the goddess only what they strictly need for their survival. According to the same principle, the foundations of the Barhan and Akkylannian cities, which cut deep into the ground like a blade in Danu's flank, are an intolerable desecration in the eyes of the Kelts.

Beyond this notion of respect that prevails over any preoccupation with creature comfort, the moral values of these tribes are also a factor that participates in their way of life we often label as "barbaric."

To understand this fully, we must first briefly come to terms with the prevailing social structure among these peoples.

Though the exercise of power is, strictly speaking, a privilege of the sacerdotal class comprised by the druids, the warrior caste nevertheless holds the official authority within each tribe. The king is by tradition a warrior, chosen for his courage and valour in combat, for he must be a symbol of strength that inspires his people and impresses his enemies. This symbolism carries down to all the warriors in the clan, whose traditional expression of bravery is an uncommon eagerness to fight and a complete and utter contempt for death. The famous image of the Kelt warriors going into battle almost naked complies with this "code of honour," as this act is a challenge to their opponents who protect themselves with armour. In the same way, they show only scorn for firearms, which are to them the last resort of cowards. To sum it up, the Kelt warrior has a duty to seek out a glorious death in battle, and this compels him to fight according to the implicit rules of his people's code of honour.

As regards the special case of the Drones, we face a different problem altogether. In their case, obviously,

the lack of technological advances cannot pass off as the result of any form of respect for nature or duty to any kind of deity. The reasons behind this undeniable state of affairs are, however, very simple and may be summed up in one word only: isolationism.

Ever since their exile, the Drones have lived the lives of recluses in the middle of their dark forest, in touch only with the former demons who continually stoked the flames of their hatred.

Additionally, the very peculiar thought process of the Drones focuses entirely on the return of a bygone order, when Cernunnos was king and when mortals were not submissive to the will of the gods. As a by-product of the coming change, everything that has been created since that ancient time will eventually have to be destroyed to make room for the new world, free of the lies and intrigues of the gods. Therefore, why should the Drones be preoccupied with things that are inescapably doomed to disappear?

Therefore, we must conclude that the Kelts, whether they come from the tribes of the plains or from the Drune clan, reject technology out of a conscious choice and not, as some inferred, because they are unable to grasp the complexities of its concepts. Furthermore, our allegedly civilised neighbour and we Barhans might learn a lesson from this account, by realising that progress is not an absolute necessity, and that we should always take care to master our own technology before we take the risk of becoming its slaves.



⁽¹⁾ Published by Reader's Indigestion,
19.90 Klús (suggested retail price).

THE ANIMIST PHILOSOPHY

Extracts from the *Travel Journals* by Ferân, Cynwäll scholar and traveller extraordinaire.

It is generally assumed that the lack of scientific and technological development among the orcish people is a straightforward result of religious prohibitions. The truth of the matter is, however, clearly more complex. The history of the orcs (and more particularly of their “artificial” origins) is one of two factors that may explain this phenomenon. The second and most important factor derives from their animist culture. Before we go any further, allow me to clear up a common misconception: animism is not merely a religion; it is a true and complete philosophical system.

The orcs, who are both a race and a people, did not appear upon Aarklash in a natural way. They do not come from another continent or from another world: they are the result of genetic manipulations made by the Syhars, and they are acutely aware of it!

Even though they no longer blame the Scorpions for creating and exploiting them, they still believe that the way the alchemists mess about with living beings is an unforgivable sacrilege. The orcs are convinced that every race, every species, and even every individual has a clearly defined place in the natural order of things, and that the gods are the only ones who may define that order. By fooling around with the laws of nature, the Scorpions are trying to replace the gods, and they will pay a heavy price for it... sooner or later.

Because of this, the orcs simply refrain themselves from studying too much science. Even the process of pondering too much about the way the world behaves seems suspicious to them. This does not prevent them from having an extensive understanding of flora, fauna, geology, and even astronomy. They have acquired most of this knowledge through animism, for it gives them a broader and more universal insight of the ways of the world.

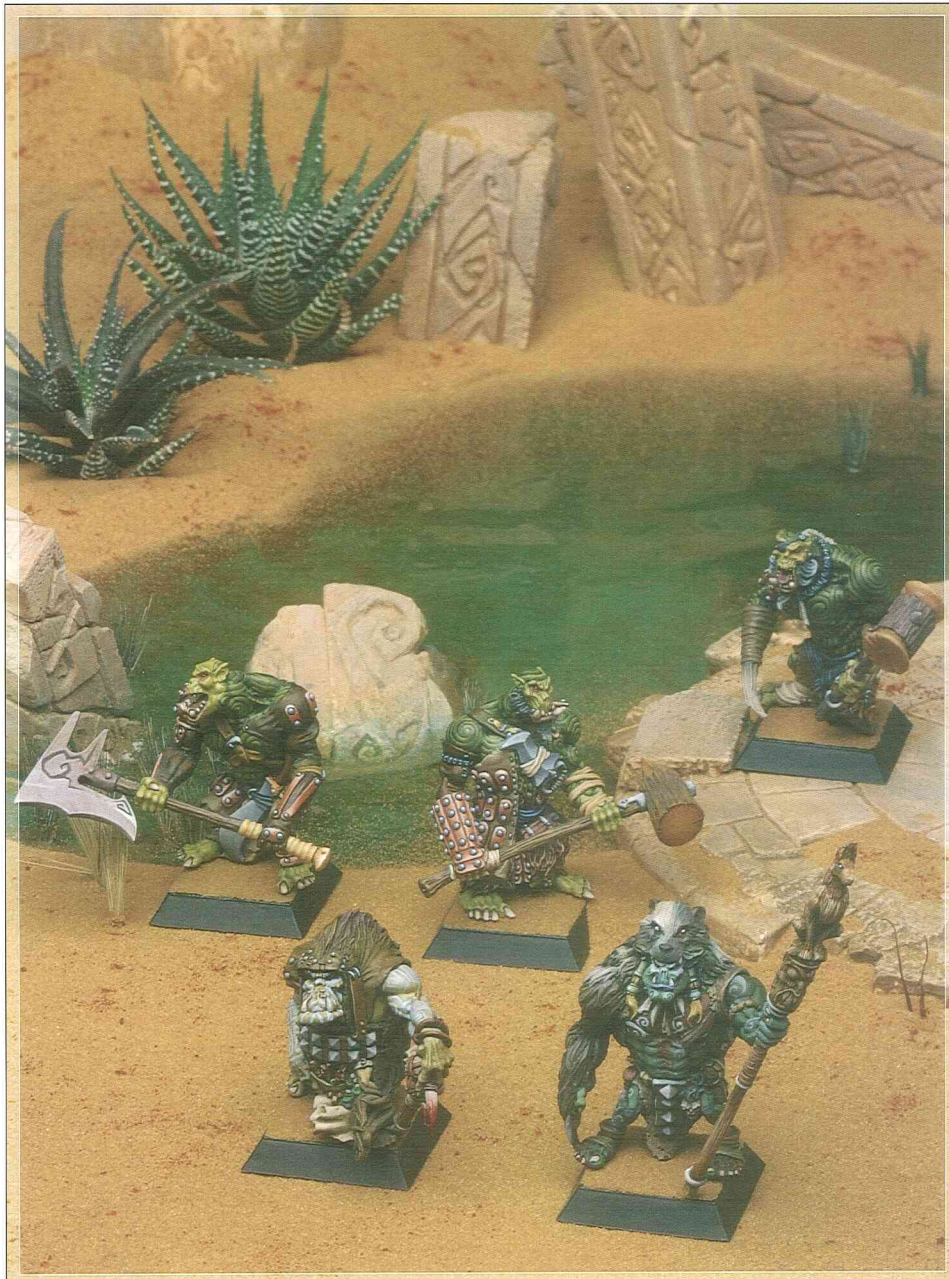
The first principle of animism is to view everything as having a soul of its own. For the orcs, animals have souls, and so do trees, plants, and even stones.

Let me transcribe from memory the conversation I had with a faithful of Jackal, Shaka-Umruk, when he was trying to teach me his philosophy.

“I understand your point for the plants and the animals, but for a stone? A stone doesn’t move; a stone doesn’t need to feed.”

“What are you saying? Have you ever spoken with a stone? Have you only ever watched one for the duration of a cycle of Yllia?”

He was clearly upset. He picked up a pebble and held it out to me.



“Where does it come from?”

“From the desert?”

“And before that? It comes from a bigger stone, don’t you think? And before? Where did the stone come from?”

“From a rock?”

“Yes, yes. And this rock came from a bigger rock, which came from a mountain.”

He put the pebble back where he had taken it, then scratched the sand to pull out a tiny insect. He turned back to me with a wily look in his eyes.

“This one lives and dies in less than half a day. If I had left him inside the sand, he would have thought we were mountains.”

His lesson was obvious; what is our life span in comparison to that of a mountain? It is but a moment, as fleeting as the life of an insect.

The second principle of the orcs’ animism is the idea that souls migrate. When any living being passes into death, its *anima* returns to the world of spirits, where it wanders for a fluctuating amount of time before it is born again inside a new living being. Some shakas are able to communicate with the spirits, and the shamans learn how to ask for their help. Indeed, many spells of instinctive magic rely on the spirits, particularly the spirits of animals. These spells allow the soul of a former animal to re-incarnate inside a physical body for a few moments. In exchange, the spirit grants a power to its host body. Sometimes the soul of a target draws directly from its past incarnations to “remember” the power sought by the spell. Even though an individual seldom remembers anything consciously about his previous incarnations, the depths of his soul always hold traces of the great joys and pains from these former lives.



This is why the orcish culture demands a boundless respect for the environment and every form of life. The orcs hunt only in order to feed themselves and use only deadwood to fuel their fires. How could they ever build fortifications or towns, universities, or laboratories? They know perfectly well that an evolution towards civilisation would compel them to throw their environment out of its current balance. This would lead to the untimely death of numerous living beings, and would injure an even larger number of souls.

What I have just committed to paper might come as a surprise to those who have already met orcs without knowing about their worldview. Indeed, despite their philosophy, they openly sport forged weapons, pieces of armour, even sewn clothes... What about the souls of these things?

It would be easy to conclude that the orcs take what liberties they please with their beliefs. Such is not the case.

Their articles of clothing consist chiefly of leather and fur coming from the animals they had to hunt down in order to feed their tribes. To throw away part

of an animal killed in a hunt, this would be the gravest affront one could do to the victim's soul. Waste is a sacrilege. Thus, the flesh becomes food, the skin and fur are used to make clothing, sheaths, or canvas, the sinews are turned into ropes and strings, and the bones give rise to tools, musical instruments, or tent frames.

The matter of wrought weapons and armour is somewhat different. The orcish philosophy utterly forbids them from digging tunnels in order to extract ore from the earth. What little ore they use is washed down by the few rivers that cross Bran-Ô-Kor during the season of plenty.

It seldom rains in the lands of the orcs, but during the hot season, part of the ice and snow melts off the heights of the Aegis mountains. The water then gullies down the iron-rich mountainside, flows down the slopes, and ultimately creates streams down in the gorges.

This thawing of the snow signals the beginning of the season of plenty, and it is always accompanied by dry electric storms. Since lightning and thunder are the most emblematic manifestations of Jackal,

the orcs view the rivers and the ore they contain as a present from their god. Moreover, the ore itself is called *Shaka-Ni-Korkha-Sri*, which may be translated as "the fruit of Jackal's union with the earth." The thawing sometimes causes landslides. On these rare occasions, the orcs also perceive them as divine favours, thus allowing them to use the stones to fashion more weapons and rudimentary tools.

Yet, even though the ore is a gift from Jackal, it is not devoid of a soul. Therefore, each step in the manufacture of wrought items is associated with a shamanic ritual. The goal is to unite the souls of every piece of ore used. When the item is complete, Jackal himself gives it a name by talking through a *shaka*. The officiant has to drink the *Shakar-O-Sar* (the "blood of Jackal," a psychotropic drug more commonly used to perform divinations of future events) in order to make contact with the spirit of the god who reveals the name of the object to him. For according to their beliefs, only the gods know the true names of things.

Consequently, every weapon and armour of the orcs has a soul and a name. So they regard them not as simple tools, but as true allies.

REASON KILLS THE INSTINCT!

The following texts are dated 998 and are taken from the last lecture of Silénus, history professor at the University of Arcavia, before he was condemned for heresy.

“Most communities view the Wolfen as common wild beasts, dominated by their basest instincts. This is how they tend to explain the creatures’ backwardness in both technology and civilisation.

“Nevertheless, even though the Wolfen truly are much closer to wolves than to humans, and even though they will never disown their instincts, it would be an extreme oversight to look upon them only as animals. For then we would forget that they do have a religion and a culture of their own. Indeed, the Wolfen are a primitive society by choice. A deliberate choice, deriving in part from their religious beliefs, but mostly from their culture and their nature.

“The simplest minds enjoy the belief that a lack of brainpower is the reason why the Wolfen do not build any city or town, and why they remain at such a primitive level of technological development. They are convinced that they have no intelligence beyond that of *Canis Lupus*, and that their weapons, when they have not been acquired through plunder, are nothing but poor attempts at mimicking the more advanced civilisations. They even add that the Wolfen ferocity towards other peoples arises from intellectual frustration.

“This is all completely false. Witness the fact that some Wolfen have become perfectly integrated into other cultures, particularly in the free city of Cadwallon and in the famous Daikinee port of Inndatè, as has been attested by the writings of the eminent professor Kasser from the University of Denda-Cartho. The professor actually had the luck to be able to study closely the Wolfen physiology. His work demonstrates that their internal organs, including the brain, are very similar to our own. A variety of tests performed on live subjects also proved that the Wolfen are fully cognizant of notions like negotiation and free will, and capable of multi-layered reasoning. Even though they tend to follow their instincts, they do have a thinking mind that they are able to heed when the circumstances demand it.

“Therefore, the technological backwardness of the Wolfen cannot be ascribed to a lack of intelligence or resourcefulness. As for their weapons and their clothes, even though some were actually acquired through plunder, they produce most of them themselves. To understand why all these objects, apart from their famous crossbows, have such simple designs, we must turn to their mythology and their belief system.

“Many Wolfen legends tell of a specific enemy: the Craftsman. This enemy has no definite

personification, not even a specific face. The Wolfen associate him with all those who favour the use of tools over the exertion of physical strength, reason over instincts, or those who alter their environment rather than blend into it. Though the Wolfen themselves claim they are the children of the Moon, I personally tend to think they are the spiritual offspring of nature.

“So the Craftsman is the figure hiding behind every advanced civilisation, especially the human ones. The legends relating the arrival of the men of Kel and the creation of the first cities do not paint a pretty picture of our ancestors. They tell of the way they cut down the forests and slaughtered the wild animals. They are probably one of the main motivations for the Wolfen to attack us. In their eyes we are the children of the Craftsman because we destroy nature instead of coming to terms with it.

“Make no mistake! I am not an ardent defender of the Wolfen ways! Men, but also dwarves, and to a lesser extent goblins, are not made to stand up to the wild with their bare hands. We are born unprotected. We have no propensity to withstand heat or cold. We do not come equipped with claws or fangs to defend ourselves, and our senses are nowhere near as sharp as are those of predators. Consequently, if we intend to survive, we have no choice but to create tools, weapons, and cities. The Wolfen, on the other hand, possess innate assets allowing them to weather all these dangers. Hence, they have no compelling reason to resort to the same ‘artifices’ we use. And as they embody the darker and wilder aspect of nature itself, creating a civilisation would compel them to deny their instinct... and thus their culture.

“Some among you seem doubtful. You must be asking yourself why, if all this is true, Wolfen even use weapons, clothes, and jewellery as they do. For the last two elements, I’ll send you back to your lessons in military strategy. I hope that you already learned there that pack leaders wear specific items of clothing and jewellery to allow their identification. Each pack has its own code to symbolise the social position of every member: hunter, warrior, priest, etc. You should also be aware that some jewellery represents honourary decorations. In fact, almost all the articles of clothing and ornaments make better sense when viewed as extensions of the discourse and body language, and not as elements of a civilising process.

“Regarding weapons, the problem is more complex but the answer will emerge once again from the beliefs of the Wolfen. I will quote an extract from the founding myth of their culture. It deals with the birth of their race: ‘Then Yllia came to see the mightiest of all the wolves and blessed him with her love. Their children would inherit the qualities of the two greatest predators in creation: the purity and the might of the Wolf, and the tools and the mind of

the Craftsman.’ And another one later on: ‘But Yllia would not let the corruption of the Craftsman win over the minds of her sons. Every time we would use her gifts, she would come to test our purity by claiming a sacrifice great or small. This way the pain would never let us forget the supremacy of nature.’

“Two essential things transpire from this text. Contrarily to what we might have thought, Wolfen are pragmatists! They fight the Craftsman, but they do so with his own weapons, for they know that despite their strength, they need the sharpness of steel and the power of crossbows to fight efficiently against the civilised peoples. However, their weapons are of mediocre quality, because they fear that objects too elaborate in their design or in their realisation might bring them closer to the Craftsman and bring about Yllia’s anger.

“There is one last element that might explain the lack of complex tools in their culture. The Wolfen are convinced that by searching too much for technological evolution, they would lose themselves. They fear that any tools they might use would have a weakening effect on them, both physically and mentally... and we must concede that a fusilier without his rifle is not worth much on a battlefield!

“I can assure you that this fear is far greater than the fear of their goddess. Even the Wolfen pariahs will not give in completely to the ease of using tools, for fear of losing their instincts.

“I will conclude with an answer for the smart alecks who probably know about Lykai and who I hear chuckling in the back row. For those of you who do not know him, Lykai is a Wolfen and a formidable bounty hunter whose weapon of choice is a powerful musket. He did not grow up within a pack and he knows very little about Wolfen culture. This is why he uses such a weapon. Additionally, the cracking sound, the flame, and the smell of burnt powder produced by his huge weapon have tired out his sight, hearing, and smell. So, far from being an exception to the rules I have told you about, Lykai actually is a living proof of the risk the Wolfen run of losing their identity through exposure to technology.”



INSIDE THE DARKNESS

To the attention of King Gorgyn.
From Amel Karan,
Labile Shadow.

Sire,

According to your expressed desire, I have conducted investigations on the technology of Acheron.

First, I wish to make it clear that to the best of my knowledge, no large-scale programme of scientific or military research has been initiated in Acheron.

Moreover, the dynasts, as well as the liegemen, like to mock the "technologies" of the other nations. I have recently heard Ganzhyr d'Hestia, the supreme commander of the fleet of the Ram, explaining that "the purpose of the dwarves' machines is to hide the martial incompetence of their creators," and that "the alchemy of Dirz is a makeshift crutch for their degeneration."

The Dark ones tend to measure an individual's power by his magical aptitude only, disregarding the strength of his arm or the acuity of his mind. In fact, the whole history of the accursed barony rests upon the unquenchable thirst for more magical might. I am also intimately convinced that the dynasts are so excessively confident in their black magic that they would never take the risk of "abasing" themselves by creating machines. However, I must confess I cannot guarantee that private research by single Houses is not being secretly pursued.

Second important point: it is unlikely for the Dark ones to use weapons or machines plundered on a battlefield. In fact, they have had numerous opportunities to obtain rifles or catapults, but they have never resorted to them.

There are several reasons for this. First, most living-dead are completely unable to learn anything new. They respond to orders, but they have no autonomy at all. They no longer have a heart, nor a mind, and their memories are often restricted to a few hazy reminiscences of past battles. As for the other kinds of living-dead (I'm thinking foremost about the Crane warriors and the banshees), though they are able to learn new skills, it would be a terrible loss of efficiency to use them in ways so different from their innate abilities. You are probably wondering, Sire, why the Dark ones do not straightforwardly reanimate Griffin fusiliers or dwarf armourers in order to incorporate them into their own armies. They have actually done so in the past, but only to find out that the living-dead obtained that way do not retain any of their former knowledge or skills.

Besides, not a single university teaches science or technology inside the accursed barony. Consequently, there is not a single engineer or scientist available in the country. Those humans not subjected to slavery study black magic. Apparently the place is also devoid

of architects because, as I have come to understand, even the palaces of Acheron are erected by the magic of the dynasts. This is another example of the Dark ones' excessive vanity. They have so much confidence in their powers that they do not see the usefulness of science. As regards slaves, the probabilities that they would desert in the middle of a battle are probably too high to use them safely among the infantry.

Finally, the last problem is one of military strategy. Were their armies equipped with war machines, it would restrain them to using wide and relatively even roads, whereas now, one of the great tactical advantages of the swarms of living-dead is their ability to travel easily over the most broken grounds.

Even though the minions of Darkness are so wary of one another that they stand less united than we do, the Dark ones could still get hold of some technology through their allies.

Let us dismiss out of hand the Drones, who own nothing much themselves in the ways of science, and the dwarves of Mid-Nor. I do not know exactly what the dwarves would have to offer, but the Dark ones, apart from the notable exception of the members of the House of Lazarian, distrust them as much as they distrust the Chimera.

That leaves their best allies, the alchemists of Dirz and the Akkyshan elves. Both are willing to share their secrets on one condition only: if the Dark ones themselves reveal to them in exchange the basics of typhonism and necromancy. However, the inner struggle between the Houses of Acheron is still much too strong for them even to contemplate the idea of "sharing with another people," and much less to embrace it. Why would they share with strangers the secrets they are still hiding from one another?

The Dark ones could possibly suspend the sales of their gems of Darkness to press their allies into giving in to their demands, but as they do not have a monopoly on that trade, they would run the risk of losing the market while causing a large-scale diplomatic incident.

With your permission, I might try to spread the idea of using that kind of coercion among a few persons of influence. One never knows. Embanking the Meanders of Darkness would provide us with a considerable advantage!

All things considered, the main problem could come from the Paths of Destiny. The Wolfen and the orcs do not possess anything that could appeal to Acheron. Without even broaching the subject of their isolationism, the dwarves will probably avoid establishing relations with the Dark ones as long as those remain allied to the puppets of Mid-Nor. And what little I know about the Daikinee elves lets me hope they will never compromise with necromancers. Your advisors will probably be able to give you more details on that subject.

In my humble opinion, the greatest danger lies with the goblins. Everybody knows their immoderate

longing for riches and power, and the very thing Acheron has the best ability to deliver is precisely that perverse pair of things. The only impediments liable to prevent a trading alliance are the Dark ones' distrust and the legendary goblin deceit. Knowing the people of No-Dan-Kar, and considering how far away the place is from the accursed barony, I feel that, should the goblins ever sell some of their machines, they would turn up with more flaws than qualities.

However that may be, and even though we can rest assured that black magic will always remain the spearhead of the armies of Acheron, we are not safe from a quick technological development. All it would take is for one dynast to instigate it... That individual would probably lose a substantial amount of prestige, as the other Houses would interpret the decision as a confession of weakness. He might even have to weather a rebellion from his own liegemen. Nevertheless, if the process eventually came to demonstrate the practicality and effectiveness of a union between science and magic, then how long could we hope to stand fast against the armies of Acheron?

One last thing I'd like to stress out, Sire, is our need to be extremely wary of treason from engineers, inventors, or scientists from our own ranks or the ranks of our allies. Too many people are likely to be swayed by the lure of power, and the Dark ones have become masters in the art of wielding promises. Worse yet, they are perfectly able to keep them. Consequently, the greatest danger might not be beyond our borders, but right in the heart of the kingdom.

Amel Karan

THE SUPREMACY
OF NATURE

Extracts from

A Comparative Study of the Elven Civilisations,
by Ferân, Cynwäll scholar,
Royal University of Kallienne.

"Though they have nowadays found different modes of expression, the foundations of Akkyshan and Daikinee cultures are identical. While we use the appellation of 'wood elves' for the Daikinees only, both peoples share the same environment. Whereas the Daikinees use vines, the Akkyshan rely on webs.

"The relationship to nature, though it is just as deep on both sides, also expresses itself in entirely different ways. The Sorority of Ashinân has replaced the harmony and balance characteristic of the Daikinee forests with aggressiveness and predation.

"Beware! It has become a widely spread misconception to view the Daikinees as animists, in the manner of the orcs. They do indeed have a profound

respect for nature, but they do not think that cutting a branch, for instance, is a blow to the soul and integrity of the tree. They have no compunction about pruning the plants, or even weeding them out if their growth threatens other lives. The Daïkinees are primarily interested in protecting the soul of the forest, the ecosystem in its entirety. Besides, at least one animal will not find favour in the Daïkinees' eyes: the spider. Ever since Scaëlin's betrayal, the wood elves have known mixed feelings of fear and hatred towards spiders. This does not rest only on the fact that they have become the emblem of their enemy brethren. Ever since the founding of Ashinân, the spiders have progressively grown wilder and more aggressive, as though they were under the influence of Lilith's pernicious aura. The same phenomenon has also been reported on the north side of the Behemoth mountain range, in the area of Aneirin, and in Cadwallon. Inside the Daïkinee lands, only the far northern region seems unaffected so far.

"Daïkinees and Akkyshan do not use complex machinery, but they do have very advanced knowledge in many fields, including notably botany, zoology, and biology. Their understanding of poisons and drugs is the most comprehensive of all Aarklash. Like all elves, they also enjoy a privileged relationship with animals and may command their obedience, sometimes through empathy, and sometimes through their knowledge of pheromones.

"In this way, the Daïkinees make use of animals (mainly insects) for many tasks: carrying messages, warning against natural hazards and others dangers, providing food (of which the bee's honey and the striped scarab's syrup are only the most familiar examples), and so on...

"As for the Akkyshan, they command the spiders and they have learned to tame most carnivorous animals in their domain, but those are not the only animals they use. The most subtle and yet the most devastating attack ever perpetrated against Daïkinee lands was the massive introduction of the ambrosia beetle by the Akkyshan elves. These insects burrow through the bark of trees and devour them from the inside. The only way to get rid of them is to systematically cut down and incinerate every infected tree...

"The Akkyshan also use giant animals. The underground passageways under their capital of Lythis, which run as far as the Behemoth range, were not drilled by dwarven machinery, but burrowed by gigantic 'earth-eating' worms. Moreover, though the attack by Scaëlin's hordes made the walls of Cadwallon shake, this cannot be ascribed only to the dedication of the spiders. The ranks of the army also included gigantic quadrupeds with sharpened tusks, and monsters from the deepest abyss were swimming around in the harbour.

"I do not know what the exact nature of these creatures was, but sadly, I have too much confidence in the testimonies I gathered, as well as in the resources

of my dark cousins, to be able to dismiss them as nothing more than rumours.

"The Akkyshan, just like the Daïkinees, have access to unique resources. Nature gives them everything they need. And what it does not give, they can take themselves! What would be their interest in creating machinery?

"The Daïkinees seldom come out of their woods, and they have no will to expand their borders. So they have no reason to design siege machines. Their military strategy relying almost entirely upon guerrilla tactics (ambush, hit and runs, enemy harassment, etc.), the use of cannons or other heavy weapons would be completely antagonistic, without even taking into account the collateral damage such machines would inflict on the forest itself. Daïkinee trade is almost entirely concluded in the port of Inddatè, and a handful of merchant ships is enough to supply the rest. They thus have no need to involve themselves in intense shipbuilding.

"On the contrary, the Akkyshan do have a desire to conquer, but as I did mention earlier, they use giant animals rather than war machines or transport ships. They also rely heavily on the quality of their blades, whose hardness and edge are overwhelming. Even the blades fashioned by the very best Akkylannian blacksmiths would be no match for the daggers of Scaëlin's elves.

"The Daïkinees are also adept at fashioning remarkable weapons and armour, but they tend to be more

partial to alternative materials, such as bone, ivory, wood, or chitin.

"Both peoples are equally gifted for setting traps in the woods. The most common form these traps take is still the classic 'poisoned stakes at the bottom of a hidden pit' routine. However, the Akkyshan and the Daïkinees both have the ability to use much more complex, some would say much more devious, materials and designs. Be wary of vines hanging down in the middle of a path, some might well be coated with a contact poison. Avoid stagnant ponds! Some of them are artificial and hold a sticky sugary fluid. This is obviously not dangerous in and of itself, but a few miles further down, a surge of sugar-sensitive carnivorous ants will get the better of any reckless trespasser...

"If the Daïkinees and the Akkyshan do not use any form of technology, it is not for fear of upsetting their environment, because of overconfidence in their knowledge and abilities, or even in apprehension of a god's wrath. The thing is, they merely happen to have no use for it.

"Should the need arise, however, because of a threat to their existence or to their way of life, there is absolutely no doubt that both kind of elves would be completely capable of entering the technological arms race. And judging by their practicality and their adaptability, they would certainly perform brilliantly in it."



THE CYNWÄLL CONSTRUCTS

GOLBORAK, THE VISIONARY ENGINEER OF NO-DAN-KAR, WAS BUSILY WORKING IN HIS OFFICE WHEN HE HEARD A STEADY RUMBLING SOUND AND A GREAT DISTURBANCE IN THE WORKSHOP. NOTHING TOO SURPRISING IN A MECHANICAL ENGINEERING FACTORY, EXCEPT FOR THE FACT THAT THE EMPLOYEES SOUNDED EVIDENTLY PANICKED. HE REMOVED HIS GLASSES AND CURSED. WHAT WAS SO HARD ABOUT HAVING A BIT OF ORDER AND DISCIPLINE AROUND THE PLACE? HE WENT TO THE DEER OF HIS STUDY AND OPENED IT...



PISTONS AND SORCERY

The resounding scolding the chief engineer intended for his employees remained stuck in his throat. Standing on the doorstep was an individual no taller than he was, with an unshapely silhouette and a face hidden by the hood of a black cloak. This remarkable visitor was actually a female goblin: Golborak recognised the Babayagob by the broom she was holding. The glowing eyes of the witch held the engineer's gaze. She searched the folds of her clothes and produced a book.

"And now, my dear, it is your turn to fulfil your part of the bargain," she said abruptly.

"Your explosives are in the crate you see over there. You have no idea what it costs to..."

"You have no idea what it costs me to obtain this work."

The Babayagob threw the book at him contemptuously and left with her payment.

Golborak could not care less. What he had now in his hands was enough to ensure a bright future for himself. Golborak I, future emperor of No-Dan-Kar, slowly closed the door and stepped back into his study as he examined the long sought-after book. He set it down and opened the first page. Introduction to the design, operation, and maintenance of Cynwäll constructs, by Valiryn, helianthic craftmaster of the University of Wyde, republic of Lanever. This promised to be some fascinating reading material.

FIREWARD

Construct: Complex mechanical tools derived from the helianthic technology of the Cynwäll elves. Artefact, Automaton, appliance, construct.

This definition alone fails to convey the breadth of shapes and purposes that can be found among the Cynwäll constructs. No other category of objects is as deserving of the name of artefact, treasure of an ancient time born of a science forgotten nowadays except for the legacy of the heliasts.

Many constructs were designed by their creators to help with mundane tasks, research, or the transmission of knowledge. The telescopes and giant astrolabes of the University of Wyde prove that point: every night, they allow us to explore the canopy of stars. Those artefacts are more ancient than the Cynwäll nation. It is unquestionable that those that have come down to us have not yet revealed all their secrets.

Sadly, the constructs we are now familiar with, those whose proper working order is guaranteed by the heliasts, are for the great majority those used for war. The repeated aggressions against our republic have allowed us to delve into the capacities of tactical constructs much faster than we were able to research any other kind. May providence grant future generations the wisdom to...

"Blah, blah, blah," Golborak whispered. The workshop, the noise, the whole outside world, everything was becoming blurred and insignificant. There was only himself, the greatest inventor of No-Dan-Kar, and the book that would uncover for him the trade secrets of the Cynwäll constructs. With that kind of knowledge, nothing would resist him! The goblin engineer began turning multiple pages at once with a feverish eagerness.

CHAPTER III: THE ANCIENT CONSTRUCTS

Light does not only allow us to awaken the powers of the constructs, but also to dramatically increase their capacities. Our fathers were quick to find out that the ancient constructs they had discovered in the

foundations of the temples in Lanever did react to the touch of Light, according to the "Principle of Clarity." However, it took many decades and incredible accidents before they came to understand precisely how it worked.

"Give me specifics!"

No heliast will cringe from admitting that he has only a limited knowledge of the ancient constructs. The machinery involved in their operation is so strange and complicated that very few of us are able to piece them back together correctly after they have been taken apart. Such a trial, for it is indeed a trial, is mandatory for the elevation to the rank of master among the heliasts.

As such, the ancient constructs are more than just the treasures of our civilisation. They are the focus of strenuous research, and we haven't given up hope of finding, some day, in the heart of those machines, the secrets of our own origins...

"Those stupid elves... They dream of deciphering the past in machines whose technology eludes them! I would use these machines to bring about the future. MY future!"

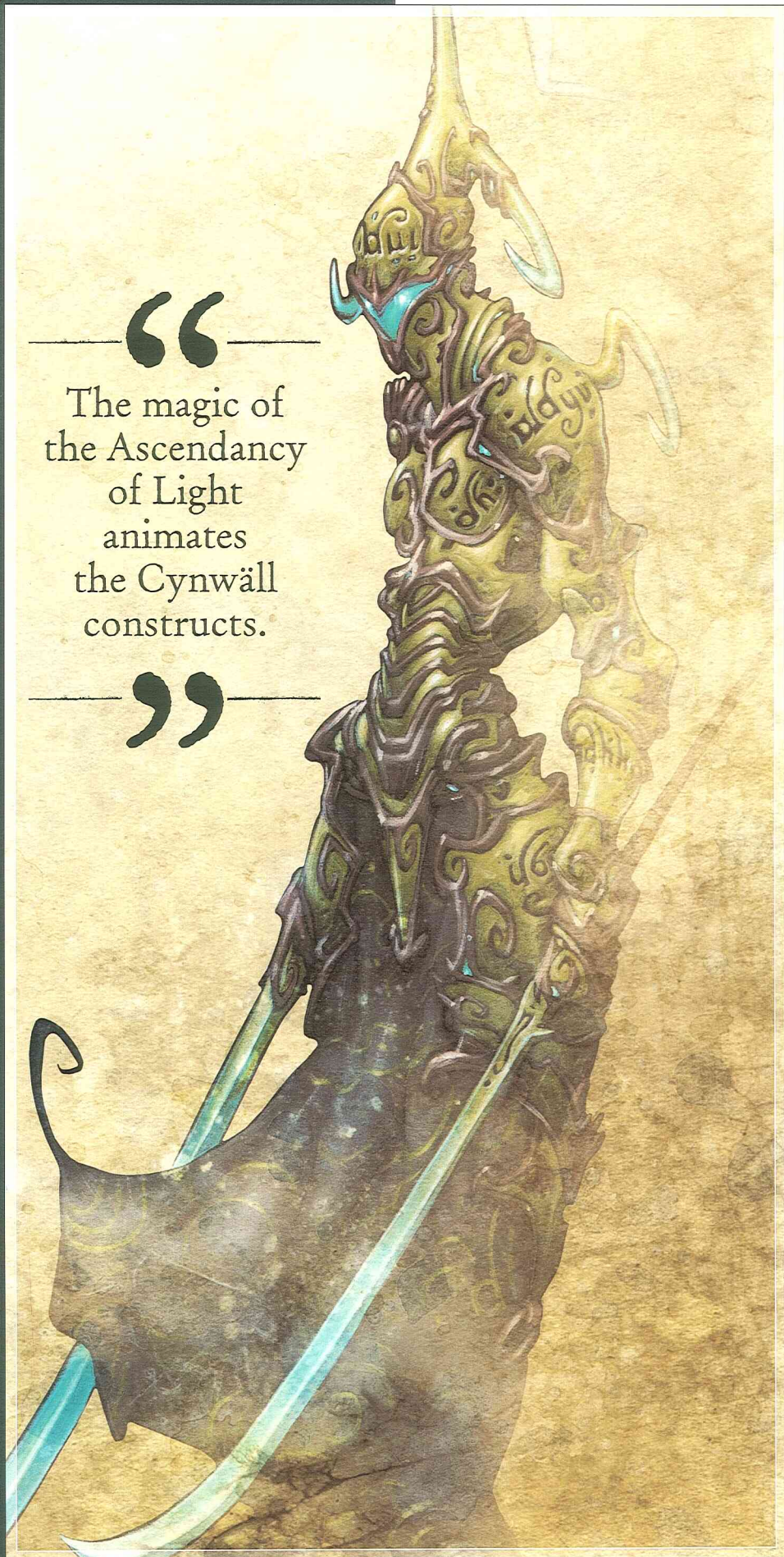
A greedy smile spread across his face as Golborak skipped another bundle of pages.

CHAPTER VII: THE MODERN CONSTRUCTS

The heliasts have used the knowledge gathered as the centuries went by to replicate the ancient constructs and combine their most simple mechanisms. Even though they are far from matching the magnificence of the originals, these copies and prototypes are nonetheless formidable devices that bestow pride upon ourselves and fear upon our opponents.

Let us acknowledge that none of this would have been possible without our Lion allies. It is an established fact that the wizards of the Chimera are able to glimpse the unseen. The hermetic magic of Alahan, with its circles of power that vie in complexity with our

“
The magic of
the Ascendancy
of Light
animates
the Cynwäll
constructs.
”



most awing mathematical theorems, has filled some of the gaps in our understanding and allowed us to create this new generation of constructs. They demand more Clarity to be activated than their ancient counterparts do, but we are free to forge them ourselves according to our needs. The weapons and armour of our best soldiers are now endowed with mechanisms ever more resourceful and ever smaller... but still very expensive.

Our only rivals in this field might be the fiendish alchemists of Dirz with their biomechanical approach, followed by the courageous dwarves of Tir-Nâ-Bor, always prone to favour efficiency over aesthetics.

“Hey, what about me? I’ll teach you who your only real rival is, you silly bunch of amateur handymen!”

CHAPTER XXII: THE AUTONOMOUS CONSTRUCTS

Some constructs are gifted with an utterly astonishing form of self-sufficiency. Like automatons, they carry out the same tasks over and over again, relentlessly and ceaselessly obeying an order engraved in the very heart of their mechanical structure. Others are able to adapt to changing circumstances, to some extent, and go far beyond the weakness of the flesh in many domains. This is very true of the tactical constructs that roam the battlefields searching for an opponent, and are able to follow the orders given by the heliasts when they are using Light.

There is, however, one last frontier, and only the masters of ancient constructs have crossed it. To give one’s work the aspect and motions of life has been an unattainable ideal for many artists. But nowadays, the existence of intelligent constructs is no longer the mere rumour it used to be: it has become a palpable reality since the leaders of our republic have resorted to them during recent confrontations on the border of Acheron. The emergence of these constructs able to learn and use complex reasoning is indubitable proof that we are now not very far behind the masters of ancient times in terms of wisdom and knowledge.

Golborak suddenly stopped reading, unconcerned by the significant revelation he had stumbled upon. He leafed hectically through the book’s last chapters and then shut it harshly, his eyes filled with rage.

“Not a single diagram! Not even one schematic! Will I have to capture a heliast myself in order to tear their secrets from him?”

Suddenly, he found himself delighted by the prospect.

For people all over the continent, the mention of the guilds of Cadwallon evokes only the seven most famous ones: the guilds of Architects, Fortune-Tellers, Blades, Ferry-men, Goldsmiths, Usurers, and Thieves. In Cadwallon itself, they are called *the free-handed guilds*, and indeed they possess phenomenal resources, an influence that goes far beyond the scope of their parent city, and private troops prepared to defend their interests at all time.

MILITARY ENGINEERING

As far back as the creation of Cadwallon, Vanius tried to organise the erection of the city's buildings. To implement this project, he already had at his disposal the specialists in military engineering from the Dogs of War. This is why, historically, the guild of Architects never made an official distinction between the civil and military branches of the art. Those in charge of building and upholding the city are the same as those responsible for organising its resistance against every form of attack, be it through the sheer strength of its walls or the effectiveness of its war machines.

This tradition made the guild of Architects one of the most powerful and influential institutions in Cadwallon, and, as such, of all of Aarklash. Even nowadays, the guild brings together architects and builders with engineers and machinists into an organisation that watches jealously over its techniques and interests. The former two, known as draughtsmen, have controlled the guild since its creation. The latter two, nicknamed gearsmen, are, however, the most renowned outside of the City of Thieves.

DIPLOMACY

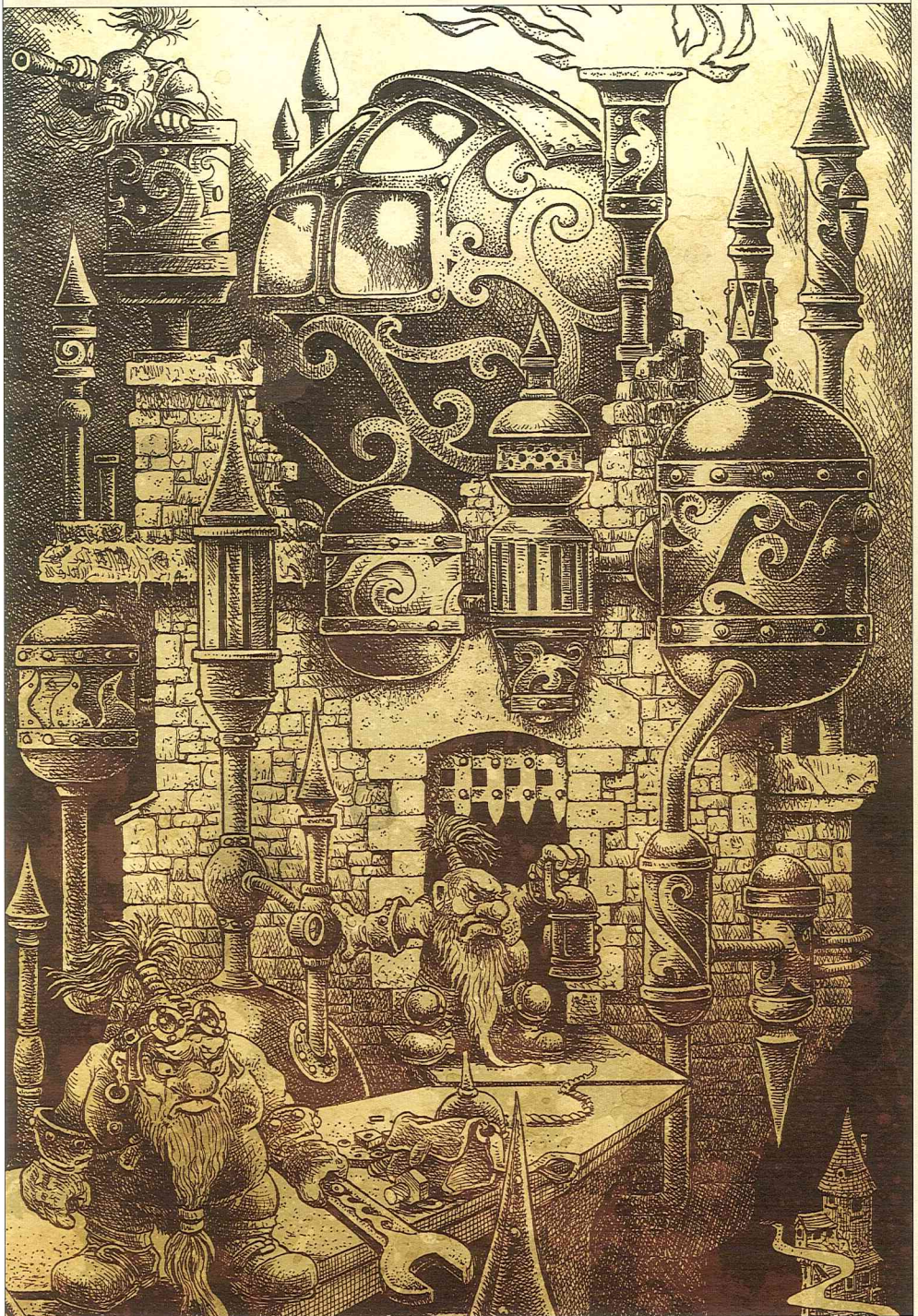
Like each of its six siblings, the guild of Architects has woven its own network of alliances, independent from the control of duke Den Azhir. Consequently, the guild members bring their support to a given number of nations throughout Aarklash. This assistance may take the form of financial gifts, "technical" help to create machines or buildings, or outright military support. Actually, each of the free-handed guilds possesses the privilege of maintaining its own private militias in order to be able to directly defend its interests inside and outside of Cadwallon.

It is therefore quite common for the guild of Architects to "loan" a few of its engineers, sappers, or plain artillerymen to an allied nation.

The first of these alliances created strong ties between the guild of Architects and the Cynwäll nation. A palpable proof of this lies with the current grand-mistress of the guild, Aëhallyn, who is an elf whose family came from Lanever. As a matter of fact, the most reputed positions of architect-draughtsmen are held by descendants of Cynwäll refugees.

THE GUILD OF ARCHITECTS

EVER SINCE THE DOGS OF WAR FOUNDED IT, THE CITY OF CADWALLON HAS NEVER STOPPED ASSERTING ITS INDEPENDENCE, FIRST FROM THE NATIONS, THEN FROM THE RAG'NAREK. IN THESE TROUBLED TIMES, THE JEWEL OF LANEVER IS LIKE A BEACON ON THE HORIZON FOR ALL THE REFUGEES FLEEING FROM THE WAR AND ITS RETINUE OF BLOODSHED AND MISERY. HOWEVER, IN CADWALLON ITSELF, SEVERAL ORGANISATIONS HAVE DECIDED TO ESTABLISH AMBIGUOUS ALLIANCES WITH THE NATIONS, AND TO GET INVOLVED IN THE EVENTS CURRENTLY RESHAPING AARKLASH. THESE ARE THE GUILDS.





BREKKOR SKARN

These offices are exclusively in charge of the upper city and its towers built over the foundations of the ancient city that stood there before Cadwallon. Consequently, many Cadwëans tend to think that the Cynwëlls are vainly trying to recapture the glory of their former domain. This cursory explanation is, however, probably insufficient, and rumour has it that the Cynwëll refugees in Cadwallon are not only trying to understand the curse that hit their own city so long ago, but also to identify other and even more ancient ruins that lie under the city and have nothing remotely anthropomorphic in their architectural design. The ties between the guild and Lanever are therefore an almost exclusive concern for the draughtsmen of Cadwallon; the Cynwëlls show no interest in the inventions of the gearsmen and refuse to share their own secrets.

At the other end of the spectrum, the relationships with Alahan and Akkylannie are based almost exclusively on the machines, particularly those built for battle. The gearsmen keep in touch with numerous specialists among the Lions and the Griffins in order to promote the exchange of technology. Therefore, variants of the same novel inventions are often put to use both by the guild and by either one of these nations.

Lastly, the guild of Architects maintains many connections with Tir-Nâ-Bor. An unsurprising state of affairs given that most *technogineer* dwarves in Cadwallon, though they operate under the authority of thermopriests, are in fact members of the guild. Beyond that, the guild has trusted contacts within the dwarf colonies in the hills of Tir-Nâ-Bor, and in military matters, exchanges abound with the military gearsmen.

THE ALCOVES

Of the seven free-handed guilds, the guild of Architects is the most hermetic; neither stealthy like the guild of Thieves, abstruse like the guild of Usurers, nor mystifying like the guild of Fortune-tellers, but truly hermetic. Though guild members do not hide their affiliation, the structure, methods, and inner workings of the guild are kept out of sight of those who do not bear the seal of the Architects,

the guild's coat of arms, the prestigious symbol that indicates belonging in an institution almost as old as the city itself. As it brings together many trades with a common interest in jealously protecting their techniques, the guild promptly developed a culture of secrecy. To reveal production or construction methods to anyone is deemed a major offence within the guild, a crime that entails banishment... at least officially. Since the guilds do not have judicial rights within Cadwallon, they usually resolve the most sensitive cases away from the city, *permanently*.

In order to best enforce and protect this culture of secrecy, every field of expertise within the guild is organised as a separate craft structure. These structures help to bring together the different trades that make up the guild, but they have also implicitly created a complex network of associations that is very difficult to manage from the highest guild levels. Because of this state of being, the policy of secrecy and the resulting intrigues, these "guilds within the guild" are known as *alcoves*. The guild of Architects is actually the conglomerate of about thirty such groups, each of them wary of keeping its trade secrets and its position inside the guild. Every alcove is made up either of draughtsmen or gearsmen. The most renowned alcove in Cadwallon is the *alcove of high offices*, which includes every draughtsman-architect of the high town. The current grandmistress, Aëhallyn the elf, comes from this alcove. Throughout Aarklash, however, people and nations come much more often in contact with the *alcove of great steelworks*, which specialises in siege engines and other war machines.

APPRENTICESHIP & MASTERY

Like all Cadwëan guilds, the guild of Architects possesses a strict hierarchical ranking system based on personal skills. The *apprentices* make up the lowest class within the organisation. They are usually young individuals who still need to learn their craft. Most of them work with a master who ensures their training and entrusts them with the most arduous tasks in the workshop. The *provosts* are those who own a certificate, obtained after a series of trials and paid for with a hefty amount of ducats. They are skilled workers acting as journeymen, and sometimes as personal assistants to the workshop owner.

Finally, the masters are the owners of the workshops, factories, and offices of the guild. The masters of each alcove elect a representative from their midst — the *hearth-master* — who symbolically brings everyone together in the heart of the alcove and illuminates them with his lore. Thus, every branch of the guild has a delegate who holds council with the *grand-master*, and has one voice when the need arises to elect a new incumbent to the highest office in the guild.

THE GREAT STEELWORKS OF CADWALLON

INFLUENCE

Despite the fact that the great steelworks of the guild have only a negligible influence inside the walls of Cadwallon, they are famous throughout the rest of Aarklash. This alcove supplies many benefits to the allied nations. It is often only a matter of delivering a new war machine, but every now and then, the agreements go further than that. In these cases, the steelworks may provide work force and equipment for the maintenance of the engines and their operation during battle, sometimes even for their protection on the battlefield. Some gearsmen from the alcove, mainly artillerymen or staff technological advisors, may be detached to serve in allied armies.

ORGANISATION

Typically, the great steelworks' basic unit of production is a yard. A yardmaster from the guild receives the responsibility of hiring all the workers and obtaining the raw materials needed. Afterwards, an outstandingly efficient machinery is set into motion, churning out the war machines suitable for the customer's demands. Naturally, the great steelworks of Cadwallon are only in business with the great lords who can afford to part with the hefty sums the guild asks for.



PHILLÉAS LYSDELANTH

The great steelworks do not debase themselves to discriminating among their customers. They do, however, save up the finest materials and the best-tested techniques for those hailing from allied nations. In the same way, military units from the guild of Architects may only be found in armies from Alahan, Akkylannie, or Tir-Nâ-Bor. Though the guild is also an ally of Lanever, it is unlikely for its members to find themselves among Cynwäll ranks on a battlefield. Firstly because the elves still make themselves scarce on the battlefields of the Rag'narok, and secondly because rumour has it they possess a technology of their own that goes far beyond the wildest dreams of the Cadwëan engineers.

Finally, should Cadwallon itself come under a clear and direct threat, the troops from the seven free-handed guilds would be likely to step in immediately to protect the city's interests.

THE TROOPS

Often attending the battles to escort the war machines from the great steelworks of Cadwallon, the guild of Architects' troops have been divided into two army corps called *opuses*.

The poliorcetic opus

The soldiers from the guild who are most often seen working within an army belong to this corps. The poliorcetic opus brings together every guild member specialised in the taking of an enemy position: siege engineers, contractors and foremen, sapper leaders, artillerymen and ballistic officers. Thus, this army corps is effectively in charge of siege machines

throughout their life cycles: production, operation, and maintenance.

The counter-sapping opus

This second army corps is the counterpart of the first. The counter-sapping opus amalgamates every unit specialised in protecting a position. This includes architects and builders with an expertise in fortifications or military structures, mining engineers, and specialist wizards or soldiers.

In the field, the counter-sapping units are mostly renowned for the many traps they set to ensnare the would-be assailants. They often dig false trenches and tunnels to lure the opposing sappers into ambushes. They also tend to the fortifications' own machines of war (usually siege machines adapted for defence). Finally, the corps includes elite units responsible for launching lightning-fast sallies aimed at the enemy's siege apparatus, in order to cause an optimal amount of material damage in the shortest time available. These units are usually made up of soldiers both able to push through the first front line and knowledgeable enough about mechanics to be expert at demolition. The soldiers from these units have been nicknamed *wreckers*, because of the way they favour blunt weapons, as those are more effective against machinery.

FIGURES

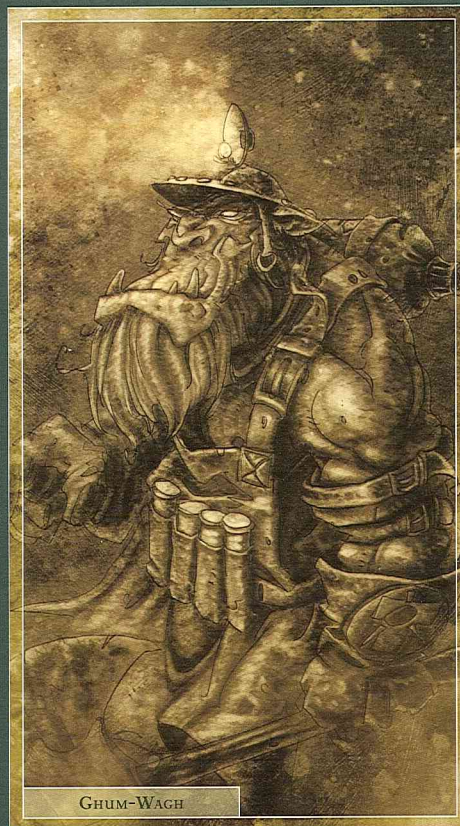
Myros Doghân, hearth-master of the great steelworks of Cadwallon

Glimpsed from a distance, Myros is invariably mistaken for an ogre clad in iron and silk. That's how tall, huge, and ugly he is. But despite his weight of over four hundred pounds, Master Doghân is a refined man, a peerless negotiator, a great theoretical expert on the arts of war, and a fancier of all forms of pleasure. At times, his reputation for debauchery may do him harm when dealing with the Griffins, but his many talents easily compensate for this "tiny" shortcoming.

Though he has great respect for the skills of Aëhallyn, Myros no less intends to supplant her some day and lead the guild of Architects himself. Some other hearth-master gearsman support him in this, as they hope that it will assert the true power of *Gears* over *Draughts*.

Ghum-Wagh, a typical counter-sapping yardmaster

This orc is a yardmaster, and as such is responsible for certain kinds of works within the defence of a site. His area of expertise is earth. Within the counter-sapping opus, he commands the digging of trap-galleries to attract and eliminate enemy sappers without weakening the structure of the defended location. He may also find himself directing the digging of tunnels to allow



GHUM-WAGH

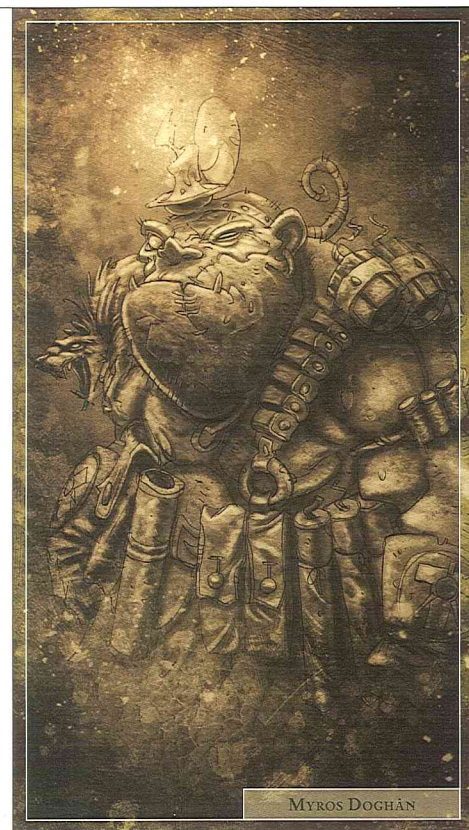
the *wreckers* to spring up and wreak havoc behind the enemy's frontline. Despite his technical knowledge, he acts as a shaman and has a mystic approach to his work. Only he can hear the grumble of the earth when a tunnel veers in the wrong direction, only he can taste the soil and gain an immediate understanding of the dangers that lie hidden in the ground. Nevertheless, when he starts talking about the "veins of the dragon" running below the earth in Cadwallon, most of his colleagues turn away in embarrassment...

Brekkor Skarn, a typical "wrecker"

This dwarf belongs to the elite unit of *wreckers* that goes out to sabotage the enemy's siege machines. His small size allows him to go down the narrowest galleries and farthest into enemy territory. All that matters afterwards is his sturdiness and his relentlessness, as he must clear a path to the machines and use his hammer to disable them by hitting decisive weak spots. Sometimes he must satisfy himself with only slaughtering the artillerymen.

Philléas Lysdelanth, a typical siege gearsman

This human officer is in charge of supervising the use of siege machines. He has a long history of studying mechanics, ballistics, thermopropulsion, and some other lethal disciplines. He has an extreme passion for every machine of destruction with complex gearing, especially the liquid-fire trebuchet and the steam-powered organ-bombards he has been working on himself, unsuccessfully, for the past ten years.



MYROS DOGHÂN

THE FREE CITY CADWALLON.

ARTICLE 1

"The league is the path by which several individuals pool together their talents and their activities in view of working towards the discovery of the treasures hidden in the city of Cadwallan and by its eldest parties."

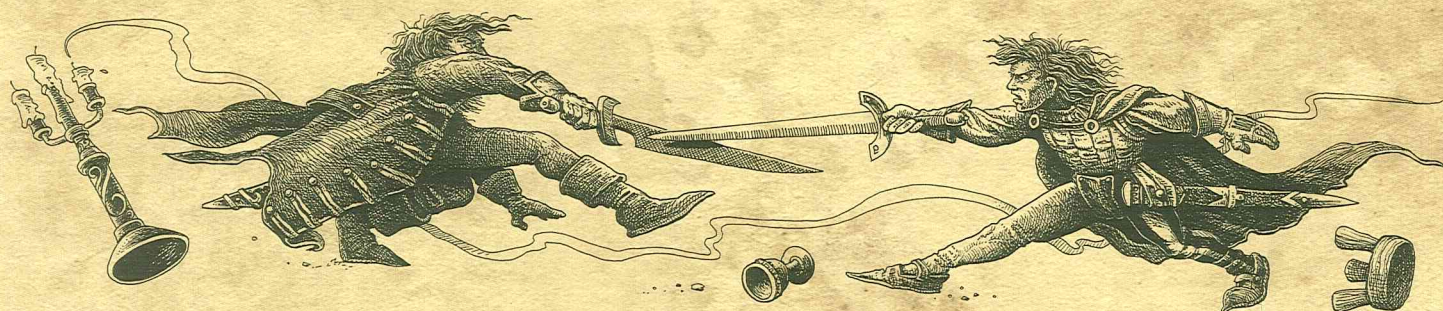
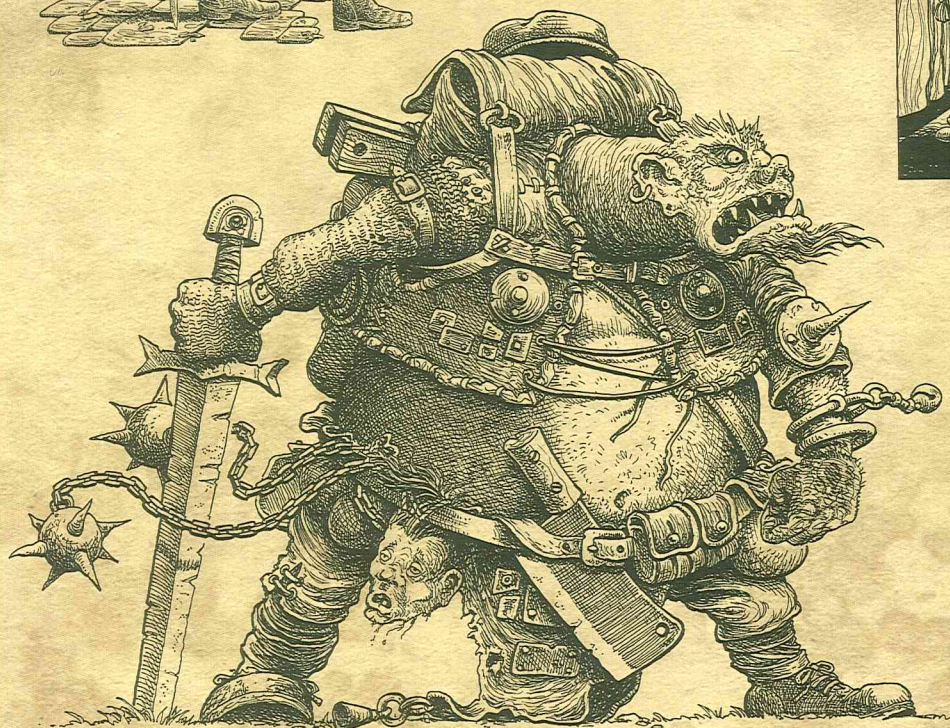
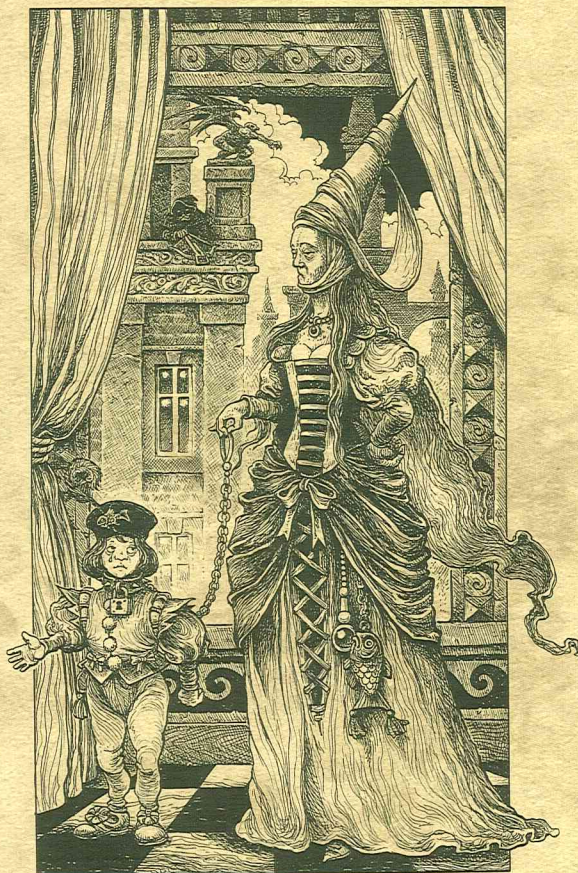
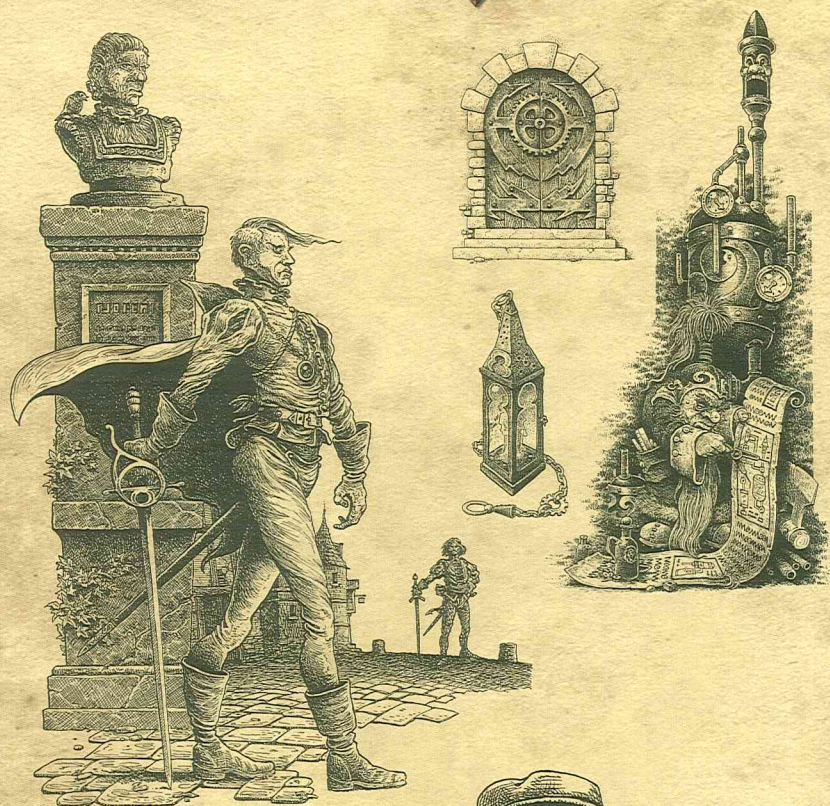
FOUNDING EDICT OF THE LEAGUES.

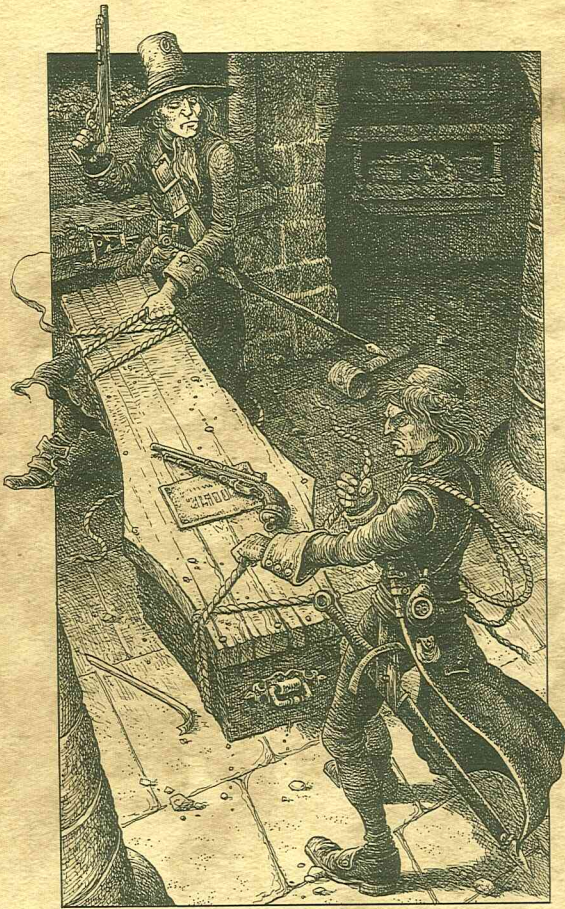
Decried by some, treated as heroes by others, the free leaguers leave nobody indifferent. Anywhere else but in Cadwallan these individuals would be treated as pariahs, banished from society or hunted down. Yet in the free city they form a privileged caste that upholds secular traditions. Through them, gamers will discover all the facets of the Jewel of Lanever... for the better or the worse.



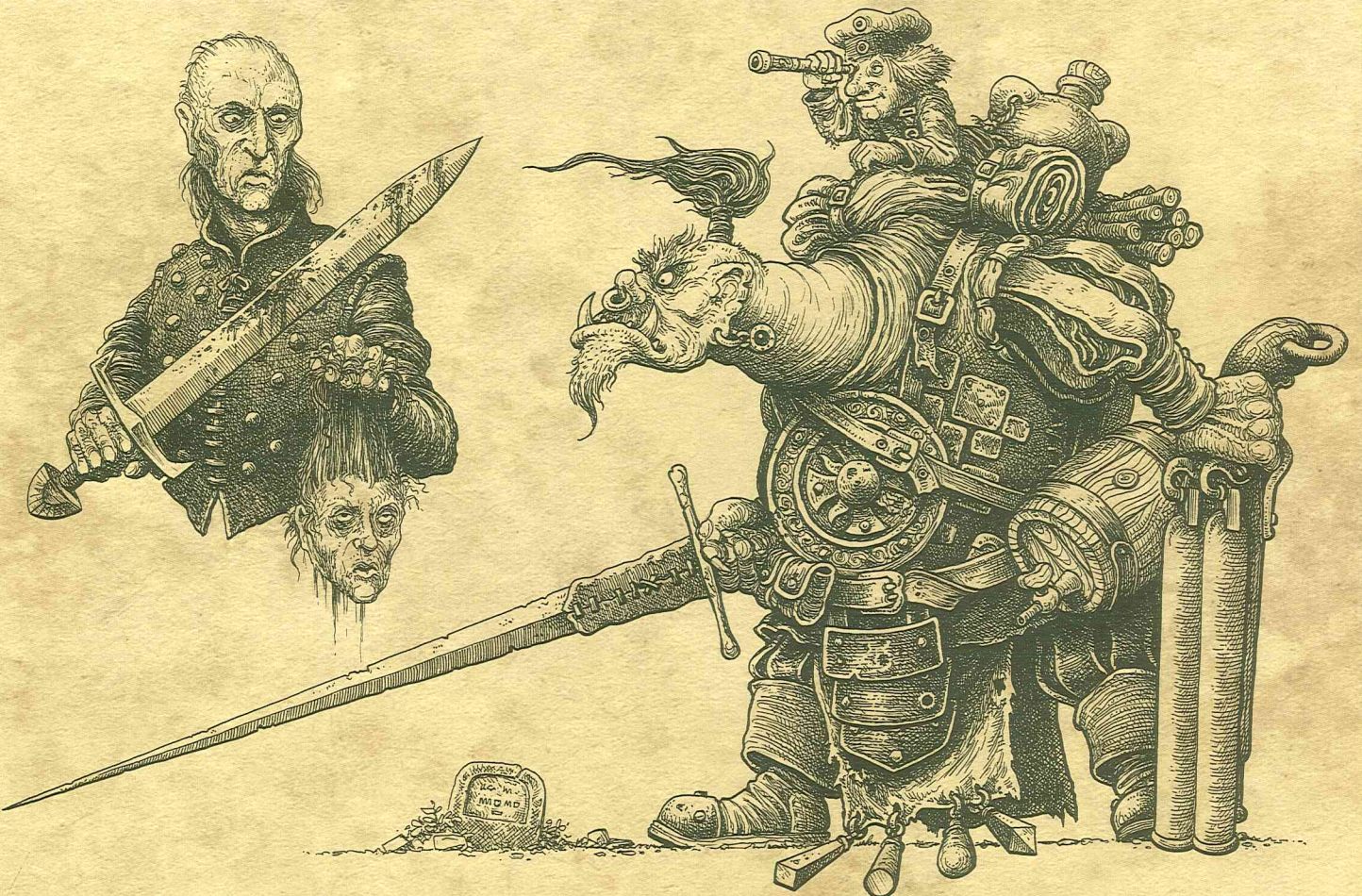








Becoming a free leaguer in Cadwallan isn't an inconsequential act. The leagues' lineage leads directly back to the city's founding mercenaries, the Days of War, and all Cadwëans know this. "Joining the trade" therefore means claiming a special status with the privileges and the obligations that this entails. This also means entering a world of plots and dirty tricks. And finally, the leagues are mistrusted and sometimes even hated by Cadwallan's other powers that be.



ISABEAU

Isabeau and her weapon-bearer roam the alleys and the roofs of Cadwallan looking for adventure and riches. The Secretive one isn't only a true master in the art of duelling; she is first and foremost the heiress of a mysterious clan. Many are those who solicit her priceless talents, unaware that she is secretly preparing the execution of a dreadful vengeance.



IRAEM

Cadwallan, the free city, isn't spared by the dreadful battles of the Rag'narok. The wars that are waged there are not won through carnage, but rather through the scheming of its courtiers. Yet an honest man rises above the snake pit and imposes his law: ambassador Iraem of Akkylannie. For him only the holy word of Merin can save Cadwallan from an eternity of torment.





