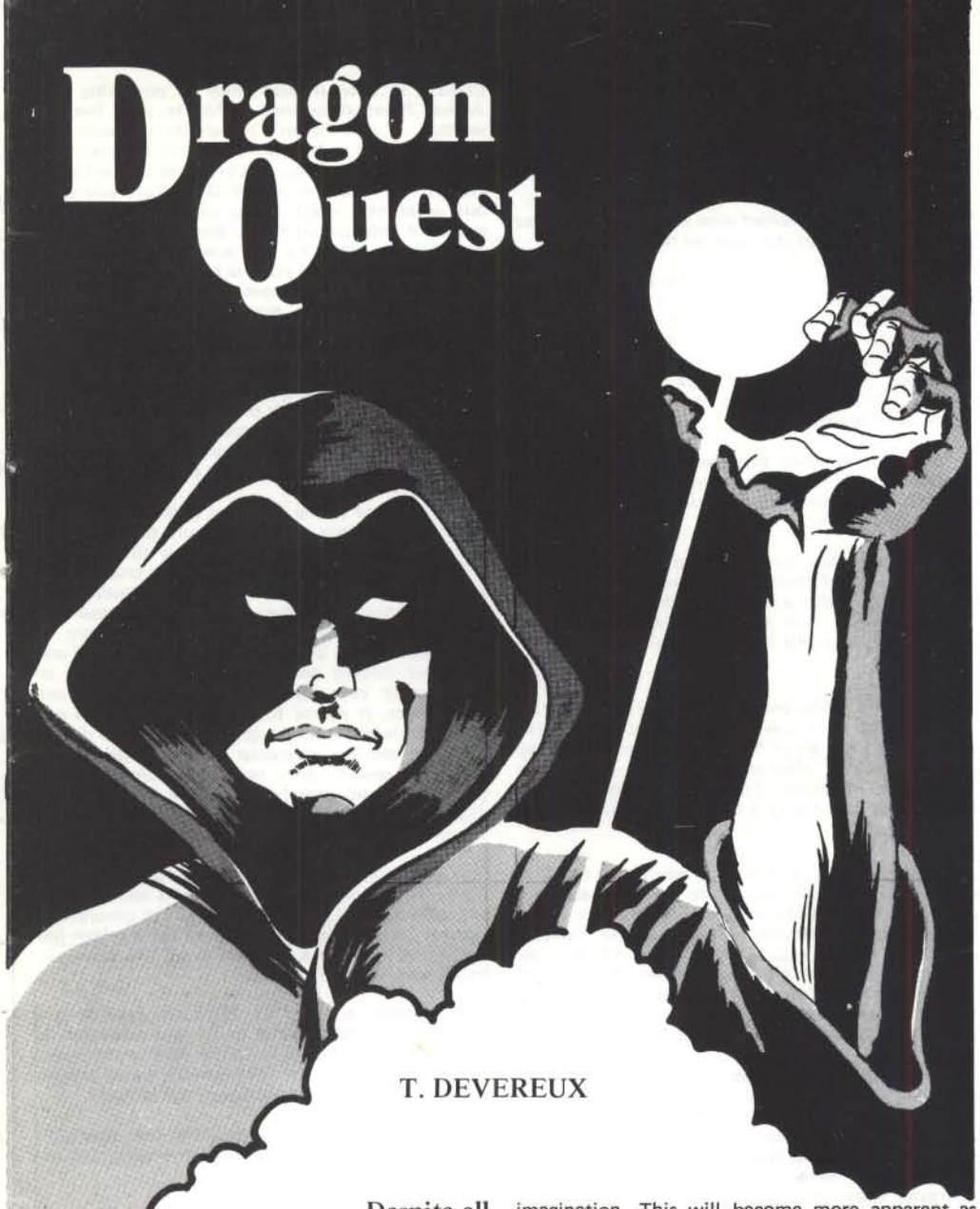
Dragon Quest



T. DEVEREUX

Despite all reports to the contrary this is NOT a game – it's more a way of life!

DragonQuest is purported to be SPI's answer to D&D or even AD&D. It comes in a colourful box and consists of three rule books and nothing else of interest. There are no dice (due to the petrochemical shortage!) and no sheets of thousands of units so beloved by the more conventional board wargamer. Oh, yes! There are a few tiddley 'punch out of the card' pieces that represent furniture for an Inn and discarded weapons, etc. But who really needs these – this is a fantasy role playing game, isn't it?

It's at this point that I must regretfully digress slightly to present you with a little background about the author – otherwise you would not be blamed for ceasing to read any further.

I have only once been involved in any role playing game, some years ago when I ran a number of adventures in En Garde. I felt that if there should be any comparisons drawn between DragonQuest and AD&D I really ought to be able to say that I had participated in both. That's one of the many reasons why this article has taken me over two months in preparation. At present I have twelve D&D Characters who spend three evenings a month discovering the many dangers and rewards concealed in the four Dungeons of which I am a member.

DragonQuest needs to be purchased by the enthusiastic role player who has a great deal of imagination. This will become more apparent as you plod through this missive.

DragonQuest has been driving me beserk! I have started having severe withdrawal symptoms. Soon, my doctor is going to let me have a try at playing board wargames again – if only I can avoid the tremendous involvement which I must assume affects all potential fantasy role players in games of this nature. Now I know how you all feel. Enough of the background – let's have a look at DragonQuest I.

The First Book of DragonQuest

The First Book of DragonQuest is a fully comprehensive 32 page volume which covers all aspects of Character Generation and Combat. The printing, layout and design, together with the overall physical quality is fairly adequate. There is a nice scattering of illustrations, (not your rubbishy American cartoons, this time!) diagrams and game charts and tables.

It would have been nice to have had stronger covers – perhaps of a stiffer paper – because constant use has already made the covers very dirty and caused them to become separated from the staples. However, the books are all of the selfsame standard and are all superbly indexed.

Book one covers a multitude of items including:–
General course of play
Description of Characters
Character Generation
Combat Terminology
Combat Equipment
Basic Tactical Procedure
Inflicting Damage
Grevous Injury
Weapons, etc.

According to the 'Parts Inventory' you do receive:-
1. A 17"x 22" game map (Tactical Display)
2. A die-cut sheet of 100 counters
3. 20 randomizer chits
4. 3 Rule Books

In case I am accused of glossing over these items by referring to .... 'and nothing else', at the start of this review, I would like to point out that I have already participated in five DragonQuests and hope to be the DQM in an adventure series held at a local Games Club.

Alright, I'll admit that I did gloss over those items. In all the games I've participated in we have only used the 17"x 22" Tactical Display twice – in cases to practice combat.

Anyone who is remotely interested in fantasy role playing normally has a fine collection of hand-painted miniature figures and can be relied upon to produce room layouts, corridors and map sheets at the drop of a portcullis.

Also, I must now proceed to my direct quotes from Rules 77.1 and 77.3 of the Third Book of DragonQuest.
"77.3
A Games Master (what about DQM?) who wishes to develop a sophisticated world design will draw a map of the continent in which most of his adventures occur. The scale of this map can vary between 50 and 350 miles to the inch ...."
and
"77.1
The Games Master plots the direction in which he wishes the adventure to proceed and then plots the rationale ...."

So now you know why there are no fantastic four colour maps covering acres of ground – you have to produce the maps. These three books of very comprehensive rules are the base from which you produce the adventure sequences.

Also, it's at this point that I must gratefully acknowledge all the help and assistance provided by the following:-
Stephen Beer,
Lance Devereux,
Charlie Forbes,
Richard Szall and
Brian Thornton
and finally to Quidnunc who kindly produced the maps of the continent .....

..... The Land of Bulbis Tartar was first chronicled by the sage Sypher Octo-Octe in the Year of the Fiends 153.

The main land masses are bounded on the four quarters of the compass by the vastness of three mighty seas: The Ocean of Darkness, The Sea of Mists and the Sea of Argentium.

The islands and continents speak in many tongues and abound in Merchants, Pirates, Brigands, Adventurers and .....

..... in the chill North West of Bulbis Tartar, beyond the choking column of sulphurous smoke forever climbing to the sky from Mount Yuppe, lies the large island known as Spelder Land, neatly divided into East and West divisions by the stabbing thrust of The Cleat. Within the fair village of Spur, the Inn of the Crooked Goose resounds far into the night with the merry cacophony of drunken revelry.

It is here that the Withered and Deformed Hand of Fate descends upon our five unwary travellers.

Milquetoast Burnheart, born a human in the Year of the Animals, Month of the Indri, 143, was rather foolhardy by nature and his huge friend – a Frost Giant by the name of Morraine Slushfoot – was physically very strong but more of a nutcase. In other words, a well matched couple! These two, met their ertswhile companions in the Inn and had a fine evening of drinking, wenching and murder. Their friends consisted of the following:-
Wun Isiya Dandyuffa (An Elf, from the village of Hayd by the Ruins of Alvan) and his female companion, also an Elf, Miss Wendy Bowtcumsin. This motley crew were soon joined by

a Dwarf Troubador by the name of Jaric, who kindly added the music to their long repartee of bawdy songs.

The Soldiers of Spelder Grignog the Usurper must have been well into their cups. There really was no reason to be so rude about Jaric's long nose.

Alas, in the subsequent brawl our five adventurers were forcibly ejected through the many orifices of The Crooked Goose leaving, behind them, sprawled in an ungainly fashion across the fire-irons, a very dead soldier. Our somewhat bedraggled and bemused adventurers, in the boldness which is often inspired by an excess of wine, decided to depart towards the South in exceeding haste, just in case someone decided to blame them for this most unfortunate accident.

They were only three hours upon the road towards Aps when they espied a tall, black-cloaked figure approaching from that very direction, accompanied by two solemn, black-robed servants.

Of course, not wanting to appear suspicious in any way, our friends immediately started to become extremely hostile towards these three innocent travellers. It was the merry burble from the blood-stained beard of Morraine Sludgefoot which made them hesitate.
"..... there's a Troop of about twelve horsemen approaching from the direction of Spur!"

Immediately everyone rushed about trying to find a large hole in which to thrust their heads.

In fact, when the Captain of the Militia asked Milquetoast to account for the strange actions of the party, adding as an aside, that he was attempting to investigate the murder of a Trooper at the Inn of the Crooked Goose in Spur, Milquetoast frothed slightly at the mouth and fell flat on his back with quite a creditable imitation of a dying fly. Eventually, after Morraine had tried unsuccessfully to unseat one of the Troopers the entire group were overpowered and escorted back to Spur, where they were incarcerated in the local Clink.

At two o'clock that morning, the tall cloaked figure presented the group with an ultimatum:-

1) *Face the Magistrates in the morning and answer a large number of charges which started with: resisting arrest, attempted murder of a Trooper of the Militia, and the Murder of a Trooper at the Inn on the previous evening .....*

or

2) *Accept a Contract to attempt to find the Merchant Jeremiah Ebeneezer Goldstein – who it was believed was being held captive by a group of Orcs in the distant desert.*

Milquetoast conferred with his companions and agreed to accept the lesser of two evils.

At four in that morning, Morraine was struck on the back of the head by a cloth wrapped bundle which revealed a lump of stone, a cloth and the key to their cell. At first light our friends were well to the West of the village where they discovered pack horses, weapons and equipment left for them by their black-cloaked sponsor.

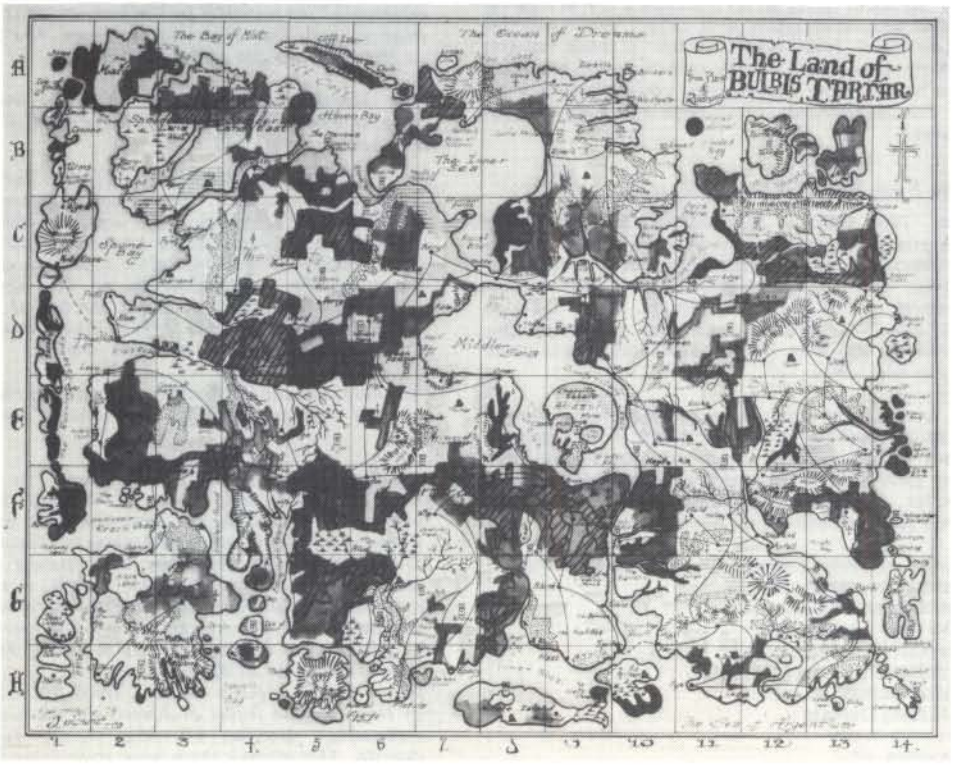
On route to their final conflict with the Orcs, there were one or two successful confrontations and a well conducted battle with six Orcs on the desert road.

However, due no doubt to the relative inexperience of their elected leader the last battle between 6 Orcs was unsuccessful in that Wendy Bowtcumsin was killed, the remainder were severely wounded and were overcome and captured.

Indirectly, Milquetoast was rather pleased as he lay on his back waving his legs and arms about feebly in the air in his fourth attempt at doing 'the dying fly' after all, they did get to meet the famous Merchant Ebeneezer Goldstein, who was also being held prisoner by the same group of Orcs.

The above is only a shortened version of our first **DragonQuest** which took place over two separate meetings. Before starting these adventures we held two complete sessions of learning the Combat System. I would also like to further express my thanks to Richard Szall who acted as our DQM throughout this first attempt and will leave the reader to try to add the characters names to fit the correct player. (All will be revealed at the end!)

I feel that the Combat System deserves more than a passing comment. I consider that the DQ system is very slightly better than that used in **D&D** and **AD&D**. I must emphasise that in all the fights I've participated in, be it against Orc, Harpy or Carrion Crawler, the movements and actions of each character seem to be accomplished mainly by the person who can shout loudest and longest at the DM. Also, these actions or reactions are sometimes executed in an indifferent, arbitrary fashion, frequently to the detriment of the game itself.



Combat in **DragonQuest** relies on you using your Action Point Allowance (APA) to your best advantage. If you haven't the ability to move fast, then you have to be brave and stand and take your punishment – but you don't need to be the first to attract the attention of the DM before you work out what you want to do and then, in proper sequence one would hope, leap forward and accomplish it. Praise for the system is all very fine. Now for the snags. If you are not well versed in the Combat System it can seem to be a very long time before anyone gets around to you and your method of killing the nasty beastie – especially if you are the sixth or seventh in a long line of adventurous characters. This long wait gave me the experience of having 5 out of 6 characters wander off and start doing their own thing – from playing very badly on an ancient piano to watching other games being played. Only returning to resolve their own combat when called for by the DQM.

Of course, one of the solutions to this problem immediately presents itself. Make sure that the party of adventurers attending their very first **DragonQuest** is attacked by more than one creature. (A pack of wolves is a useful 'weapon' to ensure constant attention.) Another solution is to make sure that each character fights as part of a team. If there are two or three of you being attacked and each one relying on the presence and ability of every other character to help and assist where appropriate, it makes for much closer liaison and cameraderie between players. This ability to dive in and help another character is not 'impaired' by expecting one to only react 'according to what your alignment may be.' You will find that this slightly different approach works – and your characters will soon form their own 'fighting teams.'

Character Generation again has a slight edge on **D&D**. The 'randomness' (while it is still present) has been mostly negated. Each player generates a number on the Point Generation Table which immediately provides a value of Total Characteristic Points and a Group Letter.

For example, a figure of 13 would provide you with Characteristic Points of 91 and place you in Group D. These points, within limitations imposed by further rules, must then be distributed among your six basic characteristics, *at your choice.*

The main characteristics are:- Physical Strength, Agility, Magic Ability, Manual Dexterity, Endurance and Willpower.

If you want a 'butch' fighter, lump a lot into Physical Strength and Manual Dexterity – if you want a magic user fill out the Magic Ability Characteristic. You have to be careful – because it's quite possible to generate a physically strong Giant who has a very low Manual Dexterity and you will find to your horror that he would be incapable of picking up a knife and using it.

In your first **DragonQuest** it's an idea to allow each character just a little leeway and provide for some minimal adjustment to a few of their capabilities after they have discovered the weapons that they can't use.

Opportunities are also provided for each character to be of another race, including Elf, Dwarf, Giant, Halfling, Orc and Shape Changer. This combines with further charts which generate each character's heritage, social status and parentage. The final chart in this section supplies each one with Experience Points and enough Silver Pennies to commence their first adventure.

The First Book then details, over a further twenty pages, the Combat System which I have already briefly touched upon. This covers:- Action, Facing, Strike Zone, Fire Zone, Attack Zone, Strike, Hit, Damage, Grievous Injury, Ranged, Melee and Close Combat. This is followed by the choice of weapons that you are able to use.

Regretfully, I could continue to list all the paragraph headings and leave the contents therein to your imagination – I can only really recommend that you actually try the Combat System – as no amount of words could effectively describe your success (or indeed, failure) at killing a really nasty vile Monster.

I will now proceed to quote at length (with some minor amendments) from:

"12 Basic Tactical Procedure.

This is divided into 10-second blocks of time which are designated *Rounds.* Each of these consists of a number of *Pulses* of unspecified duration.

Each character possesses an *Action Point Allowance* (APA) consisting of individual *Action Points* (AP's) which represent a basic ability to manoeuvre and fight during the *Round* The characters take turns expending AP's in order to perform Actions at the rate of one Action per Pulse.

At the beginning of each Round the DQM determines the order in which characters may initiate *Action* during the Round *according to which has the highest modified Agility.*

This order is strictly adhered to for the remainder of the Round. The first character permitted to perform an Action must then announce what Action he(she) is undertaking. Each Action performed reqires the expenditure of one or more Action Points from that character's Action Point Allowance. When the first character has performed an Action, the next in order continues until all have completed. (Note: This sequence would also include Actions by any attacking characters or monsters — if the wolves attacking your party have the greater Agility — you'll get bitten first!)"

This procedure is continued until the only characters remaining are dead, captured or friendly.

I can only repreat that one needs to participate in Combat rather than read my rough description about it. The game 'Arena of Death' from Ares No 4 is a complete 'rip-off' of the Combat system and is a bit of a cheat from the publishers — but one sure method of getting at the game mechanics rather cheaply.

The remainder of these Rules cover Unarmed Combat, Infection and Multi-Hex Monsters. The last five pages containing charts and tables for the application of Combat, the Armour and Shield Tables, and the Weapons used.

Each weapon has the ability of being *Ranked.* As you progress through the game you are allowed to expend your Experience Points in two main ways.

1. You can improve your ability at the use of a specific weapon, or
2. You can improve your ability at a number of skills.

When you successfully exit from a Dungeon with your arms laden down with loot and the DQM states the total amount of *Experience Points* that he's awarding to each character you will know precisely what to do with them.

Unlike **D&D** there is no requirement to hoard your EP's until you have a huge amount which has the ability of raising you 'one level'. Here you can immediately spend them on improving your capabilities with weapons or enhancing your abilities at any of the listed Skills.

"Almost like life ..." I can hear someone saying. At least you know that an improvement in your *Ranking* in either Skills or Combat Ability provides you with a base increase of 3% per Rank.

This means that if you are quite capable of using a Battle Axe at a Base Chance of 60% of hitting a hostile character, by becoming Ranked 3 in this weapon you have increased your BC by a total of 9% — taking you, by simple addition, to a Base Chance of 69%. This *Ranking* also applies to the uses of MAGIC, so the higher you are *Ranked* in a particular Spell, the greater percentage chance there is of it doing its job.

Therefore, by implication, in the game of **DragonQuest** you have a greater control of what you want your character to accomplish. If you want to have a super fighter, keep improving his weapon proficiency by increasing his Ranking. If you want an all-powerful wizard — get him to use his Magic ability and improve his Ranking at utilising Spells.

The Second Book of DragonQuest.

This is wholly (Holy?) concerned with Magic and its applications.

For the quality of the printing, layout and design please refer to my comments relating to the First Book. (At the moment I'm looking forward most eagerly to the hard-backed versions!)

The Index contains some twenty-three items including:- Definition of Magic Terms, How Magic Works, How to Cast Spells, The Effect of Spells, Restrictions, Backfire, Counterspells, etc.

Quoting in full (almost) the first paragraph states:- 'Magic represents the effects exerted on the abilities of individuals by contact between this dimension and other dimensions. Where two or more dimensions or planes coincide, there is a leakage of energy from one to the other. Those who have the talent and knowledge can tap these and shape them for use in this plane. Such men are called magic users or Adepts.

There are three types of magic: Talent Magic operates more or less automatically, while Ritual and Spell Magic require a period of preparation before they become operational. Generally, the more difficult the task the longer the period of preparation required. Spells may be prepared within minutes, but Rituals can take hours (and even days) to perform.'

The following steps are then described in full:-

1. Spell or Ritual preparation.
2. The Spell is released, or the Ritual is completed. Followed by the Cast Check. This can result in the Spell or Ritual

a) Failing,
b) Dissipating,
c) Impacting for the desired effect,
d) Impacting for double or triple effect,
e) Backfiring in one of a variety of ways.

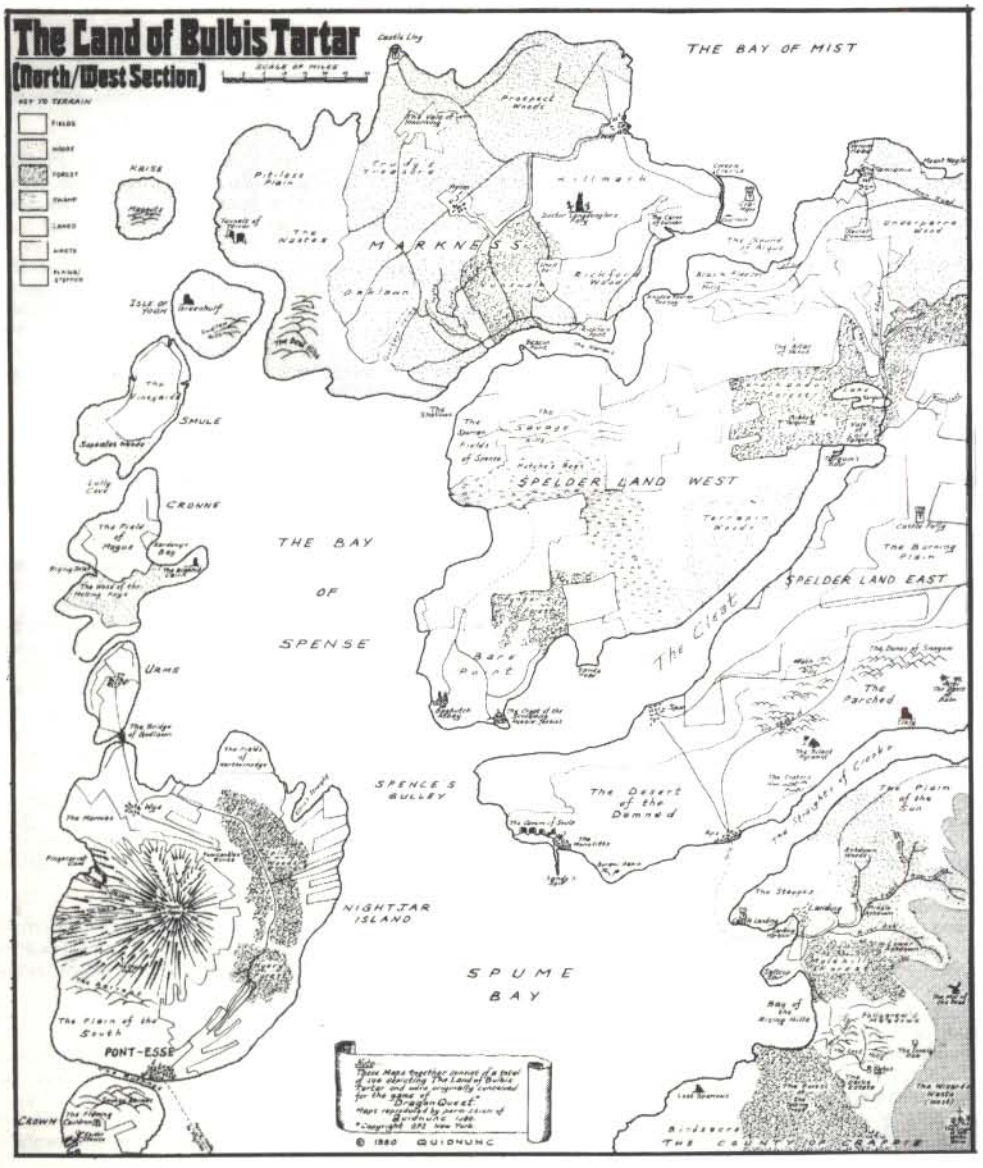
3. A 'Resistance Check' is made if the entity of Monster has a potential 'Magic Resistance'.

4. The Spell or Ritual takes effect.

Once again, I must make some comparisons with **D&D** and the conventions I have encountered with respect to the uses of Magic. In accordance with your generated character in **D&D** you are allocated a specific number of Spells before proceeding off into the deep dark dank depths of a Dungeon. Should your character in **D&D** take four Spells with him and use all four in the course of an adventure, he would have to wait until he exited from the Dungeon before these Spells could be replenished. He would tend to do this prior to proceeding down any other Dungeons, or indeed, returning to the one he had previously visited.

In **DragonQuest**, you have as many Spells in Talent, General Knowledge and General Knowledge Rituals as you have numerical value in your Magic Ability. Therefore, the higher your Magic Ability the greater your knowledge and ability at Magic. Here, Magic has been treated as if it were a lesson with the capability of being learnt and retained for the future. The convention in **D&D** Magic use implies that the 'general knowledge' is implanted in your short term memory prior to proceeding on an Adventure and once used it is temporarily forgotten.

This is not saying that all Magic users are exceptionally strong and go around shooting huge sparks out of the end of their fingers. The catch that has been built into the system is that the Base Chance of being successful in casting a Spell is balanced by the possibility of the entire Spell Backfiring upon



you and your companions. Also, in some of the cases, the Base Chance is very difficult to obtain on D100.

Classes of Magic are distributed throughout Colleges of Magic, which include:-

The College of Ensorcelments and Enchantments
The College of Sorceries of the Mind
The College of Illusions
The College of Naming Incantations
The College of Air Magics
The College of Fire Magics
The College of Earth Magics
The College of Celestial Magics
The College of Black Magics
The College of Necromantic Conjurations
The College of Greater Summonings.

The book itself, covers some 53 pages of the Rules and Modifiers used in Magic and it would not be feasible, or practical to discuss every single aspect through the pages of this article.

It is suffice to say that the Magic does work and that Paul Daniels will have to look to his laurels in the future.

The final sections of the Second Book concern the Ritual Summoning (of) Demonic Dukes, Ritual Summoning of Demonic Princes, and so on, through Presidents, Earls, Marquis and Kings. The Rituals and the Descriptions of each demonic character make fascinating reading in themselves and those who did all the research should be complimented.

I already have a character in one of my Campaigns who is being successful at Summoning Demonic Earls – and I expect him to really go places in the future.

The Third Book of DragonQuest.

The quality and design are as previously mentioned. This book contains Skills, Monsters and Adventure. The first section deals with the skills and abilities of your character. These range through: Special Skills: Spoken and Written Languages: Alchemist: Assassin: Astrologer: Beast Master: Courtesan: Healer: Mechanician: Merchant: Military Scientist: Navigator: Ranger: Spy & Thief: and Troubador.

Let's look briefly at the skills involved with just one of these. While this will not assist in explaining the details appropriate to all the other skills referred to, it will describe the range of attributes covered together with the exactness of detail. We will have a look at

50 ALCHEMIST

Again, it's not really feasible to quote verbatim from the 1½ pages of the Rulebook which covers Alchemist, so we shall browse slowly through it and give you a few pointers.

50 ALCHEMIST
There are five areas of study:-
Chemical analysis and
The effects of ingestion or application of a liquid
Standard Chemicals
Medicines & Antidotes
Poisons & Venoms
Potions

As a character gains experience in the field he will increase the efficiency of any mixtures he produces. An Alchemist must know how to read and write in one language if he wishes to advance beyond Rank 0.

He has the ability of being able to analyze chemicals at Rank 0.
He can be injured while working with dangerous chemicals.
He can work better using the proper equipment.
Includes:
Cost of equipment
Cost of building your own laboratory
Cost of maintenance
Cost of renting a laboratory

An Alchemist must purchase the components .....
Includes:
Cost of Medicine
" " Antidote
" " Poison
" " Potion
and scale of charges appropriate for other similar items.

Mixtures which can be produced from standard chemicals:
Oil
Vinegar
Water
Greek Fire
Methane, etc.,
Including the Cost in Silver Pennies and in Time to produce all of these.
Medicines and Antidotes, including:-
Bactericide
Antipyretic
Salve
together with the procedure for arriving at the Base Chance of these being able to work satisfactorily.

The two final chapters describe in full the effect of introducing poisons into the bloodstream, all the costs in time and money to utilise and the resulting formulas to use to discover the Damage to a Character from the results of poison.

The final short chapter provides the base formula for an Alchemist to produce a special Potion.

Each of the Skills mentioned has its own nice little touch. The Alchemist, for example, is not able to advance in Rank until he has the extra skill of reading and writing in one language. As another example worthy of quote, the Spy & Thief Skills.

"The abilities of the thief and spy are similar, but the two are **separate** *skills. A thief must be able to read and write in one language at Rank 3 if he wishes to advance beyond Rank 3; a spy must be able to read and write in one language at Rank 4 if he wishes to advance beyond Rank 2."*

These 'nice touches' provide a good base upon which one can create a 'believable character' and also for the purposes of the game provide skills which are all interlinked with each other.

Chapter VIII is concerned with Monsters. Once again there is a tremendous wealth of material and I hope that I can be forgiven for once again just listing some of the main paragraph headings and leaving the remainder to your imagination.

These thirty-two pages commence with:
Encountering Monsters and Non-Playing Characters
Reactions and Encounters
How to Read the Monster Descriptions
Common Land Mammals

This section starts at *Baboon* and describes a complete mix of creatures through to *Wild Cat.*
Great Land Mammals
starts with *Bear* and proceeds towards *Wooly Mammoth* ....
Small Land Mammals
describes *Dingo* and finishes on *Wolf* and this whole section continues:-
67 Avians
67.2 Fantastical Avians
68 Aquatics
68.1 Fish
68.2 Aquatic Mammals
68.3 Others
69 Lizards, Snakes & Insects
70 Giants, Fairies and Earth Dwellers
71 Fantastical Monsters
72 Creatures of Nights & Shadow
73 Summonables
75 Dragons
76 Riding Animals.
Each description covers
Natural Habitat Frequency (of appearance)
Number
Description:
Talents, Skills and Magic:
Movement Rates:
Their full characteristics with a range through which they may be generated.
Weapons and
Comments:

The following Chapter is IX ADVENTURE, and completely covers the Games Masters preparations prior to proceeding with a group off onto an adventure.

77. Preparation for Adventure
includes:
A 'justification' for the proposed scenario
The 'vital statistics' of all non-player characters and monsters
A map of the area to be explored together with details of any construction which may be part of the scenario and a notification supplied to the GM (I still like DQM) of any changes in character status.

78. Game Conventions
Contains:
A time scale for any campaign game
How to adjust time throughout the game
Combat resolutions on a time base, etc.

Once again there is the introduction of some nice 'touches' in

79. Organizing a Party
in which one is able to fall back on the 'Standard Adventurer's Guild Contract' before proceeding off on some wild adventure. I'm afraid that a number of its Clauses are open to rather a loose interpretation but it might be best left to how you see it, anyway. Personally I quite like Clause 5 which states:-

"If a party member is killed or rendered incapable, the surviving party members are obliged to return his body (or what remains of it) to the place from which they started, unless forced to abandon the body because its recovery would imperil others in the party."

Unfortunately, my DQM always reads this Clause in the wrong way and would force the remaining survivors in a party to return the corpse to the place where he was born, somewhere in the Land of Bulbis Tartar. This mis-interpretation, making it easy for a party of adventurers to end up on a worthless(?) Geas.

80. The Adventure Sequence
Needs a more comprehensive quote because this is the initial basis of organising and running a DragonQuest.

"Three different time scales can be used during an adventure. The GM switches between these scales as the pace at which action occurs changes with each new situation. The choices are as follows:

"**1. The Trek/Wait Stage:** The GM resolves the actions of several minutes, hours or days in a short space of real time, because the players have chosen an activity which need not be monitored closely (such as laying in wait until night falls). The GM allows time to pass, until one of the conditions described in Case 78.2 occurs."

"**2a. The Encounter Stage:** The GM operates on an equal real time to game time correspondence, because the player characters are interacting with NPC's or monsters (i.e. beings controlled by the GM) in a more or less peaceful fashion."

"**2b. The Chase Stage:** Either the characters controlled by the players or the creatures controlled by the GM are pursuing the other. The action is resolved in segments of one minute of game time, though it may become necessary to merge with the Tactical Procedure as the two groups come into proximity with each other. Magic and Ranged Combat are possible during the Chase Stage; the GM is responsible for informing the players of the rough distance between them and their foe(s)."

"**3. The Tactical Stage:** The GM resolves combat in accordance with the Tactical Procedure in V. The player characters and the GM-controlled creatures are placed in position by the GM on the Tactical Display."

"The GM need not inform the players of the interchange between stages, because it will become obvious as he adjusts his moderating manner to the different time scales."

The remainder of the sub-headings are concerned with Monetary Matters, in which an 'average earning rate for each Dungeon' is supplied. (If you don't stick to it you will cause inflation and have to raise your commodity prices to compensate!) Fatigue Loss and Recovery, which is a comprehen-

sive description of how your Characters can regain Fatigue, the limits to exercise, addition of Fatigue Points by resting or eating a meal and the reductions in a character's Agility by carrying too much weight.

The rest of the charts and tables at the end of this volume include the Encounter Table, which enables the GM to populate the surface areas of his fantasy world, the Danger Table – which generates encounters in these areas and whether they will be friendly or hostile – and the Basic Goods Cost List, which supplies the list of supplies and costs for adventuring.

The two final tables are the Fatigue and Encumbrance Table and the Experience Point Cost Chart.

In conclusion, I consider that the game of **DragonQuest** is a way of life which requires almost total involvement. It would be of great interest to discover the views of any eminent psychiatrist regarding the release from the dull everyday world into these fantasy worlds, where it is possible to accomplish unheard of feats of strength and endurance, to discover vast hoards of treasure, and to 'physically' destroy monsters in battle.

During the period of this review I have lived and breathed 'life' into four characters and have become a part of the legend that is now contained in the continents and islands of the Land of Bulbis Tartar.

I have become 'hooked'. In 1981 I shall be attending four Dungeons every month and three Campaign games of **DragonQuest** – the fourth campaign game will be 'DragonQuest' mastered by me!

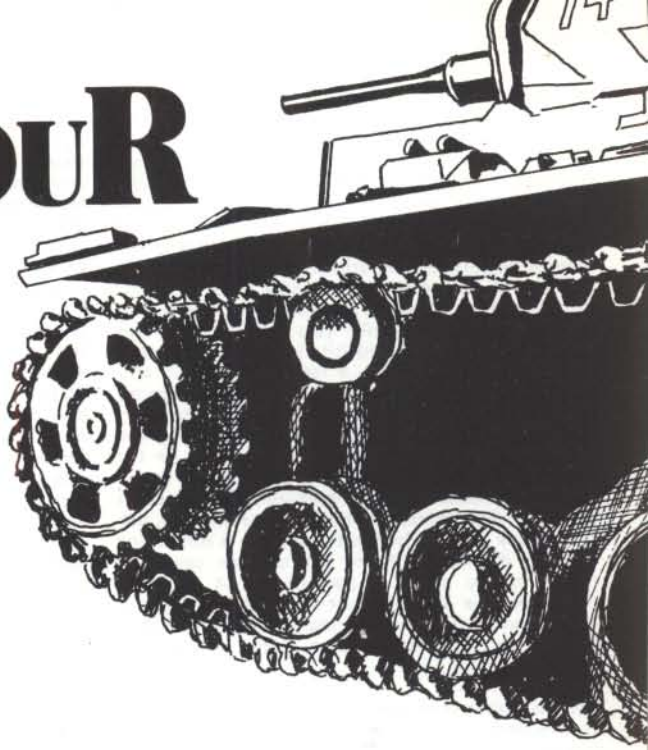
The enthusiastic fantasy role player will find immense satisfaction from devising huge continents to be conquered, hordes of creatures to populate them and numerous parties of Adventurers to travel the length and breadth of the land seeking treasure and experience.

For your information only, these were the players and their characters in DragonQuest I.

Miss Wendy Bowtcumsin	–	Stephen Beer
Wun Isiya Dandyuffa	–	Lance Devereux
Morraine Slushfoot	–	Charlie Forbes
Jaric, the Dwarf Troubador	–	Brian Thornton
The 'Leader' Milquetoast Burnheart and GM (or DQM)	–	Terry Devereux

Once again I would like to express my appreciation for all their comments and assistance – without their help there would never have been the Land of Bulbis Tartar.

ARMOUR



Tanks in Europe 1944-45

P. KING

Like many other people reading this magazine I entered the hobby by way of model kit building. With a pal of mine I discussed model tanks – we both had them so why not do something with them. Slowly we built up our own simple rules, and argued at every meeting. To save our friendship we turned to 1:300 scale white metal tanks and purchased various sets of rules. Now problems of a different type beset us. Producing terrain to scale proved difficult, totally flat surfaces were boring; infantry never looked realistic or played any part in a battle. Perhaps more importantly, tank hits were still hazily defined – was your shot at the front or side, the lower hull or the gun mantle? One point which bothered me was turret turning, one minute you were firing from one side and a turn later from the other. Naturally I invested in some models complete with rotating turrets, exquisitely detailed, but I was still not satisfied.

By this time I was trying out boardgames, so I bought **SPI's Tank**, closely followed by **Avalon Hill's Panzerblitz**. Now I do not intend going into the relative merits of these games, all I want to get at is one point, terrain. **Tank** suffers the most, while **Panzerblitz's** board has the advantage of being geomorphic, which at least gives a little variation in the ground you fight over. One of **SPI's** latest offerings, **Panzer Battles**, uses their colourful gradient system, but it means playing on the same ground time and again. Of course we also have the trend to modern armoured warfare perhaps best typified by **Mech War 2**, so what do the WWII 'tankies' do now? Before I start moralising on the virtues of returning to building model tanks, there is a ray of sunshine just over the horizon, in America to be exact.

Yaquinto have produced a three game set on tactical armoured combat during the Second World War. The first, **Panzer**, was released during their initial entry to the market and covers the Eastern Front. Using the same game system they have produced **88**, naturally dealing with the North African Desert, and finally we have **Armor** covering Western Europe during 1944 and 45. **Armor** is what this review is all about, but the other two games use the same system, so what I say here is equally valid in relation to **Panzer** and **88**.

One thing which immediately strikes you about any **Yaquinto** game is the components. Not only are they of a high quality, they are staggering in their quantity. Even with the counters punched out and stored in the plastic tray, the lid barely manages to sit firmly on the box! There are three strip maps (each measuring 21" by 9") which are geomorphic. Following no doubt in the path of **Avalon Hill's Panzerblitz**, they can be arranged in a myriad of positions: straight, staggered, bending, all ways – now that's what I call geomorphic! The only terrain shown includes streams, crests, depressions, soft ground and roads/trails. The real booster to the system is terrain in the form of hexagon, or multi-hexagon counter shapes. Hills, woods, hedges (bocage), buildings, alleys, rivers and span bridges are all put in position by the players. This terrain can be built up in any way you like. Also the pieces can be put in stacks – fancy an island on a river complete with hills, woods and a farm, then you have got it. The whole crux of the matter is that terrain is no longer a restriction, linked with the geomorphic map system you can have an infinite variety of ground to play over, no two games can ever be the same. The unit counters are double thickness and vary in shape. While a few counters are large or small squares, the majority of vehicles are oblong in shape being hexside wide and a hexagon width long. Each has a plan view of the particular vehicle plus a name and serial number for recognition. All information relating to a particular vehicle is listed on a Data Card, of which there are 49 for British, American and German units. Mind you, there are more than 49 different units, some carry information for perhaps six different units. Other accessories and playing aids include target wheels, airborne unit scatter platter, three range strips, a pad of order sheets, two double sided game chart sheets, a set of plastic decimal dice and a forty odd page rule booklet. As I said, the sheer quantity of components is impressive, the counters fill every compartment of the tray – there is no room for the terrain, it is laid on the bottom of the box with the counter tray on top to hold it all down.

Naturally the whole rules booklet is not digested in one gulp. After reading the first 17 pages you can play the basic game which only uses vehicles. Actually only six and a half pages of that tells you how to play, the rest is about counters, reading data cards, etc. Each game turn is based on simultaneous order plotting and the turn sequence involves finding lines of sight, writing orders, committing direct fire, movement and opportunity fire then a final facing segment. The scales are 50 metre hexes and 20-90 seconds of "real time" per move. Apart from the vehicle counters, each unit has a tiny round turret counter which, like the vehicle is always facing a hexside. Not only do we now have turrets which can only turn so far round each game turn, there are two counter types; one for open mode and one for buttoned up. Sighting ranges naturally vary with the type of turret counter in operation at that time.

Firing at someone is dependant upon weapon and range. The firing unit has a Gunnery Table on its data card and this will give an armour piercing factor related to range. The factor is found on the Hit Chart and indexed with a modifier number to give a percentage chance of inflicting a hit. Various modifiers are used, such as vehicle movement, target terrain, target size, side shot and so on. All are added and subtracted from a base of twenty. Linked with the chance of a hit is the possibility of more than one hit, since some vehicles had a high