

# TALISANTA

for enthusiasts of the Talislanta RPG.

*Issue 1.1*



→ **NEW**

Talislanta 4th edition

# TALISLANTA

## I n s p i r a t i o n s

We took a survey on the email list, asking where people turn to for inspiration in creating Tal games, or in trying to describe Tal to others.

Unfortunately, we don't have space to print all the suggestions and comments from the other list members. We can share some of the ones we thought were

most interesting or inspired:

SMS' main inspirations, besides Vance, were Marco Polo's *The Travels*, and H.P. Lovecraft's story, "The Dreamquest of Unknown Kadath."

Other written works include: the poems "Kubla Khan" by Coleridge and "Ozymandias" by Shelley; Robert Chambers' short-story collection, *The King in Yellow*; Robert Silverberg's Majipoor series; Michael Moorcock's Elric and Corum Sagas; *A Dictionary of Fantastic Places*; Joseph Campbell's *The Power of Myth*; and Barry Hubart's *A Bridge of Birds*. On the artistic side, check out the art books *Last Ship Home* and *In Search of Forever* by Rodney Matthews, and *The Pentateuch Retold* by Patrick Woodroffe.

Also try the comic book series *Nexus* (for would-be Xambrian Wizard-Hunters). And of course you've all read *The Sandman* and *The Books of Magic*, right?

And for video, watch Ray Harryhausen's Sinbad films, especially *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad*, and also the films *The Dark Crystal* and *Labyrinth*. Three good anime films are *El-Hazard: The Magnificent World*; *Record of the Lodoss War*; and *Fushigi Yuugi*.

\*Alexia note - I'd like to add to the list the following inspiration:

Errol Flynn - a true Zandir



art by Rich Wallace

# TAMAR

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## Welcome, and peer into *Tamar*!

*Tamar* was born from someone's casual query on the Talislanta email list, "Whatever happened to the old Tal newsletter, the 'Black Savant'?" Alexia was quick to leap forward (impetuous Zandir that she is) and propose starting a new "newsletter." But "news" of Tal is hard to come by, and we want to do more. :) We've formed a small group of writers and artists from the list members, and we'll be publishing original, "unofficial" game material about Tal: cultural discussions/backgrounds, rules variants, new archetypes, stories, artwork, and even sheet music. We do have the full support of Stephen Michael Sechi, the creator of Talislanta. But *Tamar* will be a place for Tal fans to publish their ideas, rather than an official source of new material.

To some extent, *Tamar* will be covering material already discussed on the email list or available on web pages. However, we **are** getting entirely new material from our writers and artists, and we are **printing** the zine and distributing it as widely as possible, to help spread the word about Tal. We are also focusing on the new "Tenth-Anniversary Edition" of Tal, since we're very excited about it.

We hope you enjoy what you see as you look deeper into *Tamar*.

**Philos**, Editor

## Table of Contents

### Articles & Tales

Profile of an Aeriad	3
Zeethara	4
Crystalomancy	12

### Featured Columns

Music of Talislanta	5
Zanth, It's a town... (archetypes)	6
The Lyceum Archives	8

### From the Publishers

Damn the Wicked Pudding (Letters to the editor and such)	2
Colophon	14
Classifieds	16

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# Damn the Wicked Pudding!!!

## letters to the editor and such...

As this is the first issue of Tamar, the letters to the editor were few and far between (about as far between as you can get).

Philos decided to run this piece from the Talislanta email list.

If you have a letter to the editor please address it to:

**plarose@cyberzone.net**

or

the editor

**TAMAR**

c/o Utica Drop Forge Publishing

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Recently, Stephen Michael Sechi was asked how Jack Vance's novel *The Dying Earth* served as an inspiration for Talislanta. He responded:

For me, it was several things:

- Vance's imagery, which is by turns evocative, beautiful, and disturbing...
- The strangely mannered way in which his characters speak, which I like a lot better than the "Thee and Thou" school of fantasy writing, or its opposite, the silly/anachronistic style of writing characteristic of TV fantasy writing, ala "Hercules". In Vance's books it seems that everybody is a wiseguy - even the so-called "monsters" have a decidedly dry sense of humor...

- Vance's idea of how magic works in his world (which, BTW, formed the basis of the first RPG magic system, D&D). From the names of his magicians to the names of their spells, it's very colorful stuff...

- His unusual and eccentric characters, cultures, and creatures.

I think it's fair to say that Vance is an acquired taste - though he's well-respected by other fantasy and sci-fi writers, he never was hugely popular with the reading public. After I read *Eyes of the Overworld* I was hooked. Of his many books I think my favorites would be *Rhialto the Marvelous*, the "Lyonesse" trilogy (more of a traditional fantasy, though still plenty quirky in spots), and his sci-fi books, the "Planet of Adventure" (yow, what a name - publisher's choice, not Vance's, BTW) series and the very strange *Palace of Love* (gotta like that Mad Poet character from the "Demon Princes" series).

SMS

**"I think it's fair to say that Vance is an acquired taste"**



Art from Talislanta Archive

## “Profile of an Aeriad”

by Gil Young

All gamers have their own unique reasons for playing Talislanta, but no matter how different those reasons are, we all have one thing in common: we like telling war stories afterward. For instance, have you ever had a moment during the game where you broke character so badly you totally embarrassed yourself? Just completely forgot what you were doing in the middle of a game, destroying the mood for everyone else? Probably not. But it happens, and sometimes it's just... peculiar:

From “Blue Moon: *Autobiography of a Warrior*”, circa 640 N.A.

“After a short and uneventful stay in Kasmir, we set off east toward Dracarta. We were an unlikely bunch. I was probably the only Mirin anyone in lower Talislanta had seen who retained his natural blue color. My beloved Sabine sported skin of deepest indigo and a Za broadsword and whip. There was the Batrean woman who simultaneously hated and lust-ed after every man she encountered; the oddly-paired Gnomekin and Mogroth merchant team (the poor Mogroth allowed the Gnomekin to ride his shoulders all the way to Dracarta); the naive Cymrilian Archeologist; and Willow, who was... unique.

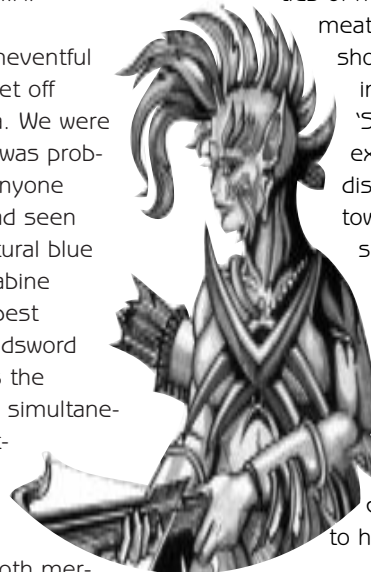
“Willow was a blue Aeriad, an excellent scout if a little high-strung. She was a strict vegetarian, preaching endlessly about the evils of eating meat, eggs, and

even erd milk. Every time we sat down to eat, she would weep loudly for about a half-hour for the poor, noble beast sentenced to die for our monstrous appetites. Sometimes she would eulogize them. The smell of cooking meat made her recoil as if it were a Monad fart. Between her and the Mogroth's cooking, I lost 15 pounds in two weeks.

“A week's travel east of Kasmir, we encountered a herd of land lizards. Eager to add something to our diet of bitter mungberry stew, we sent her on to scout while we discussed the possibilities of hunting one of the great beasts for meat. Then Sabine tapped me on the shoulder and pointed. Willow was flying toward the herd at top speed. ‘She's scaring them off!’ someone exclaimed, much to our collective dismay. Indeed, she was heading toward them at top speed, but when she reached them, she singled out a straggler, readied her tri-bow and rapid-fired every bolt she had into it. Her ammunition spent, she swooped down without missing a beat and tore into its jugular over and over with a frenzy of slashing crescent knives until it died. We all ran to her to see what was the matter.

“She was covered in blood, panting, clutching a crescent knife still clotted with flesh and bits of scales from her aborted attempts to gut the carcass. When she saw us, she demanded, ‘Does anybody know how to butcher this damn thing??’

“We don't talk about that incident.”



## Zeethara

by Joe Porrett

This Zandir instrument has 24 strings and the most difficult and bizarre tunings of any instrument in Talislanta. Few have mastered the zeethara, and those who do are viewed as menaces, since this instrument creates tones so off-key and discordant that they have been compared to the Drukh songs of madness.

The zeethara finds its humble origins in Zandu. It is said to have been designed by a minstrel and tavern owner in or around the year 530 N.A. as a means to empty his establishment at closing time; inebriation increases the torment caused by the zeethara. Many practitioners of the zeethara claim that it was created by Thazros of the Ten Thousand. Thazros loved to cause discord, so there may be something to this story. There are many connoisseurs of the zeethara in Zandu, but it has yet to catch on elsewhere. In fact, the Sultan hosts an annual competition, on the twenty-first of Laeolis, to find the best zeethara player in Zandu. The winner is given a prize of five thousand Crescents and is exiled from Zandu for one year, to give the "gift" of the zeethara to the rest of Talislanta.

The Bodor consider the zeethara a travesty to the art of music. No Bodor has ever mastered the zeethara, for even the act of tuning the instrument, which can take up to three quarters of an hour, gives them severe headaches. A few days before the Competition of the Zeethara, Bodor leave the city en masse, only to return when the winner has left the city.



art by Ed Heil

### Instructions for playing a game of Tal online, using IRC: (from Tipop)

From hotbot.com or your favorite search engine,  
search for "mIRC".

This will take you to a variety of pages, on  
which you can download "mIRC". Once you've  
downloaded it and installed it, read the manual,  
which will explain the basics of  
Internet Relay Chat.

### **Read the manual!!!**

You should have no trouble logging on to a Dalnet  
server,

(Dalnet is the IRC network I use.)  
and go to channel #AD&D

(this is a general forum for rpg discussions).  
Look here for players for your game.

A pre-release of the Tal10 rules  
(for IRC-players who are new to the game)  
can be found at

**[www.concentric.net/~Tipop](http://www.concentric.net/~Tipop)**



## the Music of Talislanta

### Table Dance (Gao-Din)

Though seldom lethal, the acrobatic Table Dance is still a quite risky endeavor and one of the more spectacular happenings at Gao-Dinian taverns. It is in many respects similar to a duel: two contestants, dancing on a table, try to outdo each others' death-defying manoeuvres until one of them loses his balance - usually falling off the table and occasionally breaking his neck.

The number of broken legs and dislocated shoulders is increased by the fact that Gao-Dinians, like many others, are more inclined to dance after they have had a few drinks. On top of that, the table rapidly gets slippery from ale spilled by the rowdy

audience, who beat the rhythm of the song with their tankards. If both dancers are still standing after two choruses, the Bodorian musicians simply raise the tempo; with Thiasians and Sarista dancing, they can end up playing pretty fast indeed.

The melody line is played on an athal (two-string fiddle) and the base line on a lutara (a three-string baritone lute). Both melodies are also used in various drinking songs. One of the most well-known is "Aa the impotent and the Zandiran virgin," which comes in several versions, ranging from merely comical to outright dirty.

by Ben Lyngfelt

### Table Dance (Gao-Din)

"Hysterical"

The musical score for "Hysterical" is presented in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of four systems of two staves each. The first system is marked with a '1' above the treble staff and a '1' below the bass staff. The second system is marked with a '5' above the treble staff and a '5' below the bass staff. The third system is marked with a '9' above the treble staff and a '9' below the bass staff. The fourth system is marked with a '13' above the treble staff and a '13' below the bass staff. The melody line (treble clef) features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, with some rests. The bass line (bass clef) is primarily composed of quarter notes and eighth notes, providing a steady accompaniment. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the fourth system.

## "Zanth, It's a town of Limitless Possibilities..."

Optional Archetype Possibilities  
submission from Colin Chapman, aka Psygoblin

Sometimes the Talisiantan cultures can seem stereotyped.

Surely not every Cymrilian must be a mage,  
every Danuvian a warrior, every Farad a merchant?

Who does all the regular work?

Or, from the player's perspective,  
"Can I be a Djaffir but play a different role?"  
Why yes, you can.

Here, for example, is a new Djaffir archetype.

Djaffir Caravan Guard

Homeland: Djaffir

"The sands of fortune are forever  
treacherous and shifting. I must be  
vigilant for the dangers they bring."

You hold a respected and dangerous position in Djaffir society, guarding their precious caravans across the harsh and unpredictable sands, fighting off monsters and rival tribes alike. Scouting ahead to assess the passage and avoid ambushes, you even aid the caravan when it turns to banditry in leaner times. You understand implicitly that your greatest enemies are usually other Djaffir, and you accept this fact, for such are the sands of fortune.

The desert is a harsh and unforgiving mistress, and failure to give her due respect can prove fatal. Who knows what lies on the other side of the next sand-dune? Independently-minded but comradely, you like nothing better than relaxing while off-duty with a few hot cups of mochan, but your duty is your life. Were you to fail, your self-esteem might be shattered.  
Physical Characteristics: 5'-6', 80-160lbs. Dark brown skin, hair and eyes, wiry build.

Attributes:

INT 0	STR +1
PER +2	DEX +1
WIL 0	CON +1
CHA 0	SPD 0
CR +1	MR 0
HP 21	

Skills:

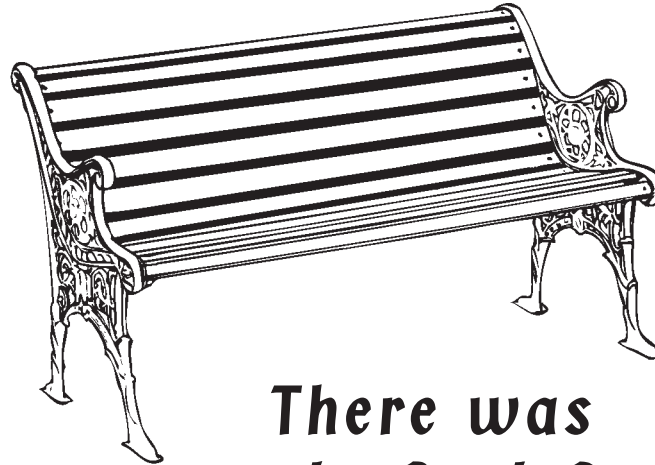
Shortbow +3  
Scimitar +3  
Dagger +2  
Brawling +2  
Mounted Combat +3  
Ride (Ahtra) +5  
Scout +3  
Camouflage +4  
Guard +4  
Survival +5  
Stealth +3  
Nomadic, native  
Talisian, fluent  
Special Abilities: None.

Equipment: Traditional leather fetish mask (Ward vs. spells of influence and control), cloak, robes and headdress of linen, boots of soft ahtra hide, curved dagger, horn shortbow with quiver of 20 arrows, scimitar, wood and hide shield, belt and shoulder pouches, ahtra steed.

Wealth: 25 g.l. in assorted currency and trade items.



# Before there was *Tamar...*



## There was *the Park Bench*

Yes that's right, this is not the first time we "Raving Lunatics" have worked together on a zine. *The Park Bench* was a music and entertainment zine based in the southern NH area (with eyes on the Boston scene) — **was, and will be again.** Due to absolutely no popular demand whatsoever, we have decided it's time to take our seat on the Bench again and offer the world our observations on life as it passes by. Because sooner or later, everyone passes by *the Park Bench*.

Thanks Phil, I'd like to add a few words... *The Park Bench* kicks ass!!! If you've ever heard about Nashua, NH (voted too many times, the best place to live in the USA) then you might be interested to see what an environment like this can do to a person. Forced to live a dream life of unlimited shopping, without the problems of culture or aesthetics to get in the way of the capitalist lifestyle, we formed *The Park Bench* as our outlet. You might

even says it's **the** outlet between the outlet (stores). Publishing Anarchy, in a neat little package...

*The Park Bench.*

Volume 1, Issues 2 & 3 are still available. 1.2 features "The Cheap Bastard's Guide to CD Shopping in Boston," and 1.3 asks the question, "How Smiths Is Now?" Both issues feature the usual mix of reviews, opinions, musings, and of course, "our little Gwen" on relationships and what they lead to... If you ask nicely, we may even be able to dig up some copies of Vol. 1.1.

Email inquiries to:

dot@gcctech.com or plarose@cyberzone.net

or write to:

*the Park Bench,*  
131 DW Hwy, #440,  
Nashua, NH 03060-5245

## The Lyceum Archives

An exploration of magic  
in Talislanta Tenth-Anniversary Edition

Words and Art by: Mark "Tipop" Williams

"The Lyceum Archives" will be an ongoing series of columns designed to spark your imagination about the *Tenth-Anniversary Edition* magic system. I'll discuss ideas for new spells, new ways of using the modes, new enchanted items, guidelines for the adventuring mage, and new magical legends and tales you can add to your own campaigns. I'll use stories and anecdotes from my campaigns to illustrate these ideas. In this first column I'll describe some new enchanted items.

You'll find no +2 swords or wands of fire in these pages. I intend to stretch your imagination somewhat.

**Don't be alarmed, I'll be gentle...**

To start, let us consider the problem of medicine on the battlefield. As most of you know, the state of the doctor's art in Talislanta is hardly worth mentioning. Quacks, charlatans, and bunglers are mixed in with ill-informed medicine men and the rare true medic. The only reliable form of healing is magical, which can be difficult to obtain, especially in the numbers needed for an army after a battle.

This was the problem facing a young Nicademas on his first adventure. He had been traveling in the Quan Empire, following some hints and half-destroyed maps he had discovered in the Lyceum Arcanum archives that might show the location of an ancient Archaen settlement. Upon locating the area, he found it occupied by a battalion of Kang warriors, resting after a long battle. After some discussion with their commander, Nicademas was able to reach an agree-

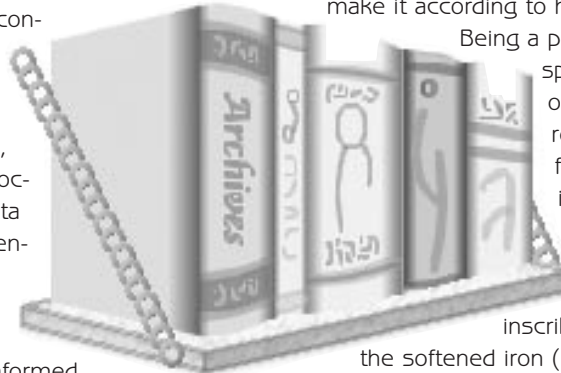
ment whereby he would be allowed to dig up the land in the area after providing his services as a magical healer.

What Nic hadn't anticipated was the tremendous demand for healing that the Kang had... They had virtually no healers among themselves, and the few Mandalans they had brought with them had either died or were missing after the fighting and presumed dead. There were scores and scores of wounded, some dying, and more on the way as soon as the next encounter with the enemy occurred.

That's when Nicademas decided that something more long-term was needed. He set about the construction of a large cauldron, ordering the Kang blacksmith to make it according to his specifications.

Being a pyromancer, Nic spent a great deal of time in the forge, reaching into the flames and caressing them, teaching them how to mold the metal. He inscribed runes along the softened iron (he was also a cryptomancer) and carefully filled them with molten gold. When he was finished ten days later, he had the Cauldron of Mending, which could be used to cook the meals of the wounded. The meals so prepared would have minor healing properties: not enough to cure any of the wounded completely, but enough to stave off death and increase the recovery rate.

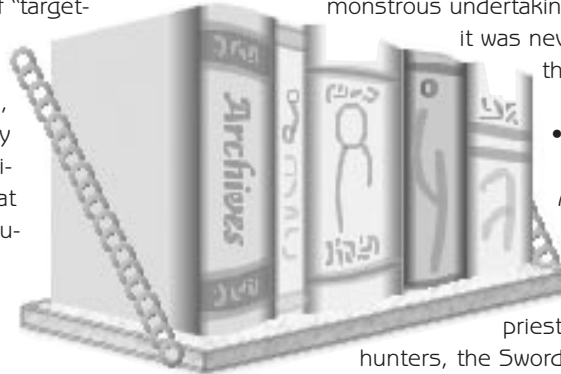
Now, in game terms, what did he do? The enchantment was a first level cryptomantic healing spell. I borrowed an idea from the Alter mode, allowing the spell to affect multiple targets by taking a -1 to the casting roll per target after the first. So the cauldron could heal a dozen people per use, one hit point each. It can be used



three times per day.

To reduce the enchanting time even further, Nicademas also put a requirement that the cauldron must be placed in a bonfire each night to recharge it, at which time the golden runes along the edge would glow with a ruddy internal heat. Thus the enchantment time was reduced from two weeks to ten days. So, up to thirty-six wounded Kang could receive minor magical healing each day, which would greatly reduce their mortality rate, and (as a side benefit) make them very grateful to this Cymrilian youth in the future.

For our second idea-sparker, let's take a look at the idea of "targeted" weapons, using the reverse of the Ward mode, Hex. Hex is usually targeted at an individual, causing that person to take double damage (and possibly other effects) from a specific source, such as arrows, snakes, falling rocks, whatever. However, Hex might also be used on an item, causing it to do double damage against a specific class of targets, such as Satada, wood, or humans. A good rule of thumb for the level of the enchantment should be the weight of the weapon.



Here are a couple examples.

- **Fist of the Tirshata**

Created by the dark witchmen of Chana before the Sub-Men uprising, this massive battering ram was imbued with the essence of dozens of plant grues, evil elementals which destroy all plant life they come near.

The black-iron head of the ram (weighing nearly forty pounds) was worked over for years beforehand, in preparation for the siege on Danuvia.

It was mounted on the end of a massive tree-trunk, with boiled leather separating the head from the wood.

The heavy battering ram does 30 damage normally, 60 against wooden structures. The enchantment is 40th level, a monstrous undertaking considering that it was never even used in the war.

- **Sword of Glory**

Created by the Aamanian high priests for their most faithful and mighty warrior-priests and witch-

hunters, the Swords of Glory are two-handed swords with the Eye of Aa beaming from the hilt. They are enchanted with the Will of Aa to smite the dark witches with His own Righteous Wrath. The enchantment is 20th level (the weight of the weapon), and the blade does 10 damage normally, 20 damage to a practitioner of witchcraft. As a "freebie" side-effect the eye glows in the presence of a witch or warlock.

(cont on next page.)



(cont from previous page.) For our last excursion, let's consider some uses for the magical mode "Alter" that might not have occurred to you.

How about adding to the CR attribute of your allies? With a 6th level spell and a -2 to the casting roll (a -8 total penalty), you could add +2 to the CR of three warriors just as a battle is joined, and the spell would last for six minutes. A +2 for three warriors can have a major effect on the fight to come.

Describing this spellcasting would vary depending on the order being used:

#### **Mysticism - The Combat Mind**

The warriors are joined in a subconscious mental link, thereby knowing each other's moves and styles instinctively, and acting as a cohesive fighting force, rather than a group of individuals.

#### **Cryptomancy - The Rune of Rage**

"Gaze upon this rune, my friends, and be filled with its power... Let the rage fill you as you face our foes, and be not dismayed."

#### **Wizardry - The Quickening Light**

The wizard holds forth his hand and three beams of arcane energy stream out to surround his warrior-allies with a coruscating light. Their muscles respond quicker, their combat intuition is sharper, and their weapons seem light as air in their enhanced grips.

Another situation: The party of six is sneaking into the Hall of the Ice King, the ruler of the Ice Giants. Only a few of them have the Stealth skill, yet silence is utterly important as they get closer to their destination. What's a mage to do? Use the Alter mode to give them the Stealth skill at a +1 rating for every three levels of the spell, of course!

A 3rd level spell, with a -5 to the casting roll would affect all six party members and

give them a +1 Stealth skill. (You could reduce the -5 penalty depending on how many already had the skill.)

This isn't a lot of skill, true, but  $d20+(DEX+1)$  is usually better than  $d10+(DEX \times 2)$ , unless one of them has a high dexterity, in which case they most likely have the skill already.

Again, this would be described differently depending on the order of the casting mage...

#### **Witchcraft - The Cat's Paw**

The witch takes a small feline paw from her pouch and touches each of the targets with it, one at a time, all the while whispering an age-old Dhuna chant. A moment later, all of her affected companions take on a slightly feline cast to their features; nothing major, just a slight lengthening of the whiskers here, a faint heightening of the ears there. All of them feel more agile and lithe than they were before.

(This description would also work for Natural Magic, although without the cat's paw being used, and Shamanism if the totem spirit is a stealthy type.)

#### **Necromancy - Silence of the Grave**

The black mage passes his hand over the face of each of his companions, and their eyes close as though in death... A moment later they open their eyes once again, and their eyes are solid white orbs (although they can still see perfectly well). When they move after that, their feet seem to land without sound, and the rustle of their gear and weapons seems muffled, as though heard from within a tomb.

Well, that's about it for this column. I hope you got some good ideas for your own campaigns, or for your own PCs to try out on your GMs.

**For now, the archives are closed.**

**Interesting in getting involved in  
TAMAR, as a writer or artist???**

We're always looking for new submissions, even if you can only send us something once in awhile. Contact us at the following address:

**TAMAR**  
**131 D W Hwy #440**  
**Mashua, NH 03060-5245**

**plarose@cyberzone.net**  
**or**  
**dot@gcctech.com**

Art in this issue provided by:

\*layout note:

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Inside Cover Logo is from the "Talislanta Central" website, maintained by Mateusz Krepicz. Is that cool, Mateusz??

The back cover graphic is from the "Official Talislanta" website, maintained by David Bolack.

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**Review:**  
**SoBe Teas**

With their catchy slogans, lizard graphics and intriguing flavors, SoBe Teas have really got something good going on. By combining the latest herbs of choice in the health industry with great tasting teas, they make the occasional walk to the neighborhood corner store more like an everyday need - a need for good tasting, healthy refreshment.

On the underside of every cap is a saying, ranging from "Drain the Lizard" (the company catch phrase), to definitions of the herbs included in the tea. These mottoes and slogans are just begging to be printed on hats and T-shirts all over the world. The eye-catching, yin-yang-positioned lizards entice the viewer to try a SoBe tea, exilir, or "powerline".

These are just promotional items and have no bearing on what's inside the bottle. Fortunately, contained in every bottle is a great-tasting beverage. I've been drinking their teas for months now, and I've sampled the whole range. I can't promise you'll love the first taste. I had a hard time getting my first sip of Black Tea down, but after that, I never looked back. With ingredients like Ginseng, Ginkgo, and Guarana, SoBe Teas have been mentioned in lots of health-related articles. I don't drink for health reasons; if I did, I probably would drink much more. The fact that these herbs are in the tea is secondary to me. Sobe Teas taste great, and if you've never had the opportunity to try one, I strongly suggest it.

More information is available at [www.sobebev.com](http://www.sobebev.com).

## Crystalomancy as an Independent Order

by Ben Lyngfelt

In the standard rules, Crystalomancy is listed as a sub-field of Geomancy and thus an Elemental field. In so far as crystals are related to the element Earth this is a natural classification. However, the Elementalist style doesn't seem quite appropriate for the Gnomekin Crystalomancers.

An Elementalist *wields* magic power. He controls his element with force, whereas a Witch, for example, uses persuasion, and a Naturalist works through harmony. Elementals are an Elementalist's allies, but he uses them the way a master uses his servants. He may be a good master, but still a master.

The Gnomekin have a more modest approach to magic. They revere Terra, the Earth Mother, and are thankful for Her gifts. They manipulate and use Her crystals, even destroy them sometimes; but they would never dream of misusing their power. And they *never* for one instant forget that they are the children of Terra. They are Her servants, not the other way around.

If we look at the game mechanics, we see some effects of these differences. For example, the Heal mode isn't available to elemental mages (an optional rule, but still an indicator of the Order's distinguishing features). Can you imagine a Crystalomancer who doesn't know Heal? To me, Terra's healing power has always been at the core of Crystalomancy. And the Elementalist's immunity to their chosen element works for a Pyromancer, who can't be hurt by fire - or an Aquamancer, who can breathe underwater - but "immune to crystals"?

All in all, I cannot bring myself to view

Crystalomancy as an elemental Order. There is still the relation between crystals and Earth, but that isn't crucial here. The Orders are essentially a matter of style. They are conventionalized approaches to magic, and I find it more than likely that the subterranean Gnomekin Crystalomancers have developed other conventions than the surface dwelling Elementalist, even the Geomancers.

So what is Crystalomancy then? Of the known Orders, Natural Magic is probably the best option. Naturalists share the Gnomekin's respectful and humble attitude towards magic, and are similarly careful in their use of it. Also, the Subterranean City can be viewed as a natural environment (and thus suited for Natural Magic) in the same way Altan of the Ariane or The Enchanted Grove of the Mandalans can.



Art by Rich Wallace



However, there are also differences. The Naturalist's communion with spirits and the Crystalomancer's dependence on crystals are good examples of features that distinguish the two from each other. Therefore I prefer to treat Crystalomancy as an Order of its own.

I propose the following set-up:

## **Crystalomancy**

The Gnomekin Crystalomancers view their magic as a reflection of Terra, the Earth Mother. They do not invoke Her power, as do priests, but they work their spells in accordance with Her protective nature. Like caring gardeners or foresters, they tend to the crystals, grow new ones, and use them for the good of their people and the environment.

But protect also means defend. Crystalomancers do not hesitate to use destructive forces when needed; creating landslides, producing cave-ins or blasting their enemies with harmful magics, if the homestead is threatened. However, these powers are used with strict discrimination. The thought of violating the harmony of nature for personal gain is completely alien to the Gnomekin.

Therefore Crystalomancy is considered a great responsibility and requires unclouded judgment. Only those who have a deep respect for life, a compassionate nature and an acute sense of harmony can be Crystalomancers. Few non-Gnomekin are judged to meet these requirements, and outsiders are rarely, if ever, allowed to learn Crystalomancy. All

are Terra's children, but experience has taught the Gnomekin that those who do not understand Her nature cannot be entrusted with Her secrets. And how could a surface dweller understand?

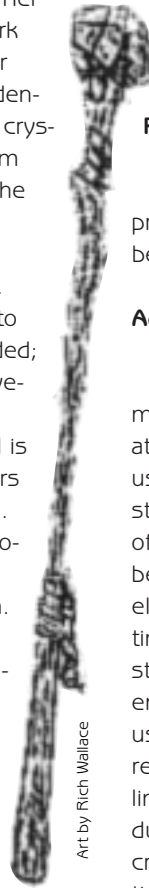
Crystalomancers do not use written works. The precepts of this Order are passed down by oral tradition. Every aspiring Crystalomancer also spends a lot of time tending crystals, and learn their properties by taking part in their growth. Over time, the student develops a deep understanding of the nature of the crystals. Often a kind of bond is established, and most Crystalomancers prefer to use crystals of their own growing.

### **Physical Components**

All Crystalomantic spells require appropriate crystals; see *Limitations* below.

### **Advantages**

*Store Crystalomantic Force.* A crystalomancer can store spells to be used at a later time. This effect, basically a one-use enchantment, requires a storage procedure of 10 rounds per level of the spell. The stored power can be used by the caster or by someone else, all at once or a little at a time; but it cannot be reused, or even restored. Once a Stored crystal is emptied of its powers, it is dead and thus useless for all magical purposes, including regular enchantment and spellcasting. This limitation is due to the storage procedure, during which a total merging between the crystal's innate properties and the properties of the spell takes place. Reluctant to burn out the precious crystals in this way, Crystalomancers are very restrictive in their use of Storing. Also note that Stored



Art by Rich Wallace

(cont from previous page.)

crystals count against the maximum number of enchanted items a person can carry.

*Affinity.* Crystalomancers get a +1 bonus to spell-casting rolls when using crystals they have grown themselves.

### Limitations

A Crystalomancer cannot do magic without crystals. Each Mode requires a specific type of crystal (see box text), and the level of the spell cannot exceed the number of carats of the crystal. Also note the ethical restrictions of Crystalomancy.

### Modes (optional)

Not available: Influence, Summon  
Bonuses: Heal +3, Defend +2  
Penalties: Illusion -2, Conjure -2

### Example Spells

#### *Mending (Transform)*

A broken object isn't hurt, the way living beings get hurt, its parts are simply separated. By transforming the edges of the pieces - first making them soft, then hard again - the Crystalomancer fuses the parts together, and the repaired object looks as if it has never been broken. Some artists use a version of this spell while sculpturing.

#### *Terra's Touch (Heal)*

The healing power of the Earth Mother flows from an Amberite crystal into the sick or wounded recipient.

#### *Tunnel Hold (Move, Defend)*

This spell, a protection against cave-ins, comes in two versions. Either a barrier is created to hold the roof of the collapsing tunnel (Defend) or the falling earth is levitated (Move).

(cont top of next page)

## Colophon

### Hardware

Apple Power Macintosh, Gateway 2000 (used to play CDs), Apple Powerbook 190, GCC Technologies Elite XL 1208s, Elite 1212, and Elite XL 20/800 laser printers, Iomega zip drives, GCC UltraDrive Hard Drives, Polaroid Photopad, Papermate medium point pens, a Red Nissan Sentra, Philos sleeps on a mattress from an unknown manufacturer.

### Software

QuarkXpress, Adobe Photoshop, Claris Works, BBedit, Netscape Navigator, Claris Emailer, Graphic Converter.

### Typography

Text- Comic Sans MS, Klang, TAMAR logo by Tipop.

### Drugs of Choice

Sobe Teas (Oolong, Green, Zen, and Black), Dr. Pepper, Classic Coke, Easter Snicker's Eggs, Cadbury Cream Eggs, Bass Ale, Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream, Lui Lui's dinner rolls, Pasta at Vinny Testa's, Raspberry frosted Pop-Tarts, Reese's Peanut butter Eggs, ChipsAhoy cookies, Pictures of G5 Powermacs.

### In the CD player this time around

Jonatha Brooke - 10 Cent Wings, Natalie Imbruglia - Left of the Middle, Autour de Lucie - Immobile, Ani DiFranco - Little Plastic Castles, Pulp - This is Hardcore, Syrup USA - All over the Land, Marilyn Manson - Antichrist Superstar, Joe Jackson - Night Music, Cocteau Twins - Heaven or Las Vegas, Grey Eye Glances - Eventide, The Moors - The Moors, Lisa Gerrard & Pieter Bourke-Duality, Garbage - Version 2.0

### TAMAR Information

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### *The Wrath of Terra (Attack)*

Prismatite crystals, stored with Crystalomantic force, are hurled towards the target, exploding on touch.

### Enchantment

Common enchanted items made by Crystalomancy include:

- \* Healing crystals (Heal)
- \* Crystal blades, with an enchanted Rubiate crystal at the pommel (Alter)
- \* Crystals of Sealed Passage, vs e.g. Darklings, Kra, or Subterranooids (Ward)

### Modes and crystals

Alter	Rubiate
Attack	Prismatite
Conjure	Opaltine
Defend	Jacintine
Heal	Amberite
Illusion	Xanthinite
Move	Topazine
Reveal	Azurite
Transform	Achromite
Ward	Emeralite

### Crystal Growing

The art of growing crystals is covered by the skill *Agriculture (Crystals)* in the standard rules. Crystals grow 1 carat per week, and need close supervision during this

time. A Crystal Grower can maintain one growing crystal per level of ability; thus, a +10 skill means being able to nurture 10 crystals at the same time. Once harvested, a crystal cannot be grown further. Note that a Crystal Grower does not necessarily have to be a Crystalomancer.

### Wild Crystals

The Earth Mother also harbours wild crystals, not grown by Crystal Growers. Such crystals are unpredictable; most of them cannot be used for Crystalomantic purposes at all, and the rest only at the Crystalomancer's own risk. Any Crystal Grower can determine which crystals (1 out of 10) are pure enough for spellcasting and enchantment, but, short of Crystalomantic Scrying, there is nothing that can tell which of these will yield the desired results. One fourth will have other properties than expected, and even those which are what they seem are difficult to control (-5 penalty on all spellcasting and enchantment rolls).

Still, Crystalomancers value the wild crystals and take care of all they find. These crystals are Terra's gifts just like grown crystals are, and they should be handled and appreciated accordingly. Also, despite all their modesty, Crystalomancers are not completely without ambition. There is always the possibility that the unknown properties of a wild crystal will lead to the discovery of new uses for Crystalomancy.



Art by Ed Heil



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and more added all the time, including the  
Official TAMAR site which will be up and running shortly.

If we've not listed your site please email us  
and we will add you to the list, for future issues.

How do you keep a Yassan technomancer occupied for  
months?

-Have him set the clock on a Sindaran VCR.  
(joke sent in by Mike Hudak)

## The Talislanta Email List

The Talislanta game is fortunate to have a lively email list devoted to it. The idea for *Tamar* itself began in answer to one list member's question about the old Tal newsletter, and *Tamar* would not exist without the generous contributions of the list members. The Tal list is "unmoderated;" any member is free to send posts. However, unlike many other lists or newsgroups, the Tal list is not full of spam and flame wars.

Open-mindedness and courtesy are the self-imposed rules, rather than the rare exceptions. Around 30 members, including SM Sechi, regularly post to discuss all aspects of the Talislanta game; over 100 more members choose to "lurk", making occasional comments or questions but otherwise just enjoying the discussions and getting the news.

To join the mailing list, send email with a subject of "SUBscribe" to:

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