

DragonQuest Newsletter

February 1999

Volume 5, Number 02

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The DQ Newsletter is for discussions of the DragonQuest role-playing game. The key addresses you need to know are:

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The *DragonQuest Newsletter* website is at:

<http://www.ntsource.com/~psproefrock/dqn.html>
[if you are typing it, note that the server `_IS_` case-sensitive!]
This site will be updated soon. It will contain the most recent issue of the newsletter as well as links to (ftp) archives and other DragonQuest related sites.

EDITORIAL:

Writing for the Newsletter

The usual role for this space is to encourage all of you to send in new material for the Newsletter. The Newsletter was begun to connect DragonQuest players and to share ideas about the game, with the editor being principally the one who cleaned up and distributed it. Thus, writers' guidelines for the Newsletter are pretty brief and straightforward (as you can see from this email exchange with a new subscriber):

>I would also like to know if you have any submission guidelines for the

>DragonQuest Newsletter?

Submission guidelines for the DragonQuest Newsletter:

1. It is about DragonQuest
2. You send it to me (email to: dqn@ntsource.com)
3. Written in English is preferable that's about it...

>Also, what type of deadlines do you run under?

The Newsletter was previously a monthly project. I want to keep it

at least a quarterly, and will run it monthly if at all possible.

I would also like to ask those of you in active campaigns to send me ads related to your campaigns for the Advertisements. If, for example, your player characters are being hired by a public ad, please send me a copy. Or if there is an ad you can write that references your campaign, player characters selling off loot, NPCs seeking new employment, etc. I think it would be nice to add some further DQ flavorto the Newsletter. I'd be happy to run real ads, too, if anyone has DragonQuest related ads to run.

Rodger Thorm
DQN Editor

LETTERS

Thoughts on Martin Gallo's post on his proposed changes to DQ Magic published in the DQN v4.1

In the 4.1 issue of the DQN Martin Gallo proposed adding deities to the DQ universe, one per Race or College. These new deities would now be the source of magic and all adepts would be followers of their respective College deity. Martin felt that this would provide a better rationale for DQ magic.

I must disagree with this particular suggestion. The inclusion of deities, for this reason, would not add to the playability of the game nor increase its credibility. The current source of magic is 'another plane' (VI. 27, 2nd edition) from which an adapt summons power and uses it to create the magic that we have all come to know, respect and occasionally fear. This seems an eminently believable source of magic. Adding deities to this mix will merely force the question of the source of magic one step further back (i.e. where do the Gods come from?). This is an on-going question in the 'real' world. If there are deities in the DQ universe, from whom all magic derives, then from where does the deities' magic originate? Ultimately, it comes from whatever source the GM, the players and the DQ rules decide upon. As long as there is a logical rationale for this source it fulfills the basis of the game.

The article also suggested that the deities be grouped into alignment: Good/Bad, Chaos/Order. Martin believed that this would add credence to the alignment of each College. Once again I disagree. At the current time the concept of 'good and evil' in DQ is a result of individual preference and the social system in which the players find themselves. This gives the GM and the play-

ers great opportunity to 'flesh' out believable characters and worlds. As for the question of what motivates Colleges to oppose each other, this is easy enough to answer. Each College is as much a rival as is any subdivision of humans. Does the Army, Navy and Air Force require any special reason to share an 'inter-service' rivalry? Looking at the spells found in the Thaumaturgical and Entity Colleges I see no need to search for a reason as to why members of each of these Branches of Magic feel a measure of discomfort at the sight of each other. Other alignments are possible, e.g. Fire v. Water, but non-deity explanations for these attitudes could be found.

I feel that 'compulsory deities' for all adepts would restrict the game and move us towards the D&D style which I have always found too narrow and unrealistic for that very reason. The current system, with 'secular' magic, is easy to use and internally logical. There is no benefit in making such large changes.

I will, however, make one suggestion on the topic of deities. A mix of gods could be introduced into the current system as an addition to the current 'secular' DQ world. I envisage a variety of deities with different abilities and interests, some with wide-spread temples and a large number of priests, others small and purely local in nature. These deities could even be grouped into common belief systems. A player, of any class, could have the option to follow a deity or not. The decision to become a worshipper would provide a range of benefits (e.g. divine intervention, extra abilities/spells) and a range of costs (e.g. tithing, duties). If the question of deities was answered in this fashion the range of options open to players and scenarios to GM's would be increased.

In essence, I see the creation of deities as a positive change in DQ as long as it is implemented in a fashion that increases the range of op-

tions available to the players. This can be done only by allowing the 'optional' incorporation of deities into the game. This would create a whole, new range of interaction between players adding to the enjoyment of the game.

Ian Bacon
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SURVEY FEEDBACK

These are some of the responses from the survey in the previous issue of the DragonQuest Newsletter.

The thing I most like about the DragonQuest Newsletter:

- * Umm ... that it exists?
- * It's back!! 8) Oh, umm.. I mean, seeing the various optional rules that others have worked out to address flaws or holes in the system. I was particularly happy to see the Hunger/Starvation/Healing bit in this one - I've implemented something similar, but I see some things here I like better.
- * Skills/College ideas. New rules and changes to existing ones
- * It keeps the DQ hemisphere of my

DragonQuest URLs:

DragonQuest Online
<http://home.att.net/~aescylus/dq/dragonquest.html>

DragonQuest Resources & Links
<http://www.comnet.ca/~jkahane/dq/dq-links.html>

DragonQuest Archive
<ftp://ftp.netcom.com/pub/dr/drache>

DragonQuest Newsletter Page
<http://www.ntsourc.com/~psproefrock/dqn.html>

DragonQuest Home Companion (and other files)
[http://www.hoboes.com/pub/Role-Playing/Fantasy/DragonQuest/Shannon Appel's RPG Archives \(DQ Index\)](http://www.hoboes.com/pub/Role-Playing/Fantasy/DragonQuest/Shannon Appel's RPG Archives (DQ Index))

<ftp://ftp.csua.berkeley.edu/pub/rpg-index/dragonquest>

Swordworld
<http://www.compendium.org/swordworld/>

Todd Schreiber's DQ Pages
<http://www.PlatinumCrown.com/DQ/>

The DragonQuest Homelands
<http://www.spaceports.com/~dqhome/>

DragonQuest Page
<http://home.earthlink.net/%7Emjoverton/Dragon.html>

The Unofficial DQ Homepage
http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Hollow/3362/DRAGON_QUEST/DQ.html

DragonQuest Fan Page by Snafaru
<http://www.iosphere.net/~eric/dq>

DragonQuest WWW Pages
<http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Portal/7471/DQ/>

Steve's DragonQuest Page
<http://user.icx.net/~ssclark/dq.htm>

Atlantis' DQ Pages
<http://www.phoenix.org/atlantis/DQfiles/DQMain.shtml>

TW's DragonQuest Page
<http://web.dbtech.net/~tware/twdq.htm>

Discussion Group Sites

WebRPG DragonQuest Town Hall
<http://townhall.webrpg.com/index.phtml?groupid=59>

DragonQuest Discussion Group
<http://assembly.nerdworld.com/assembly.asp?assemblyid=3731>

brain alive. I like to hear news about what's happening with the game

* It got me back interested in the game! I realized there was a sort of virtual DQ "community" out there that I didn't know existed. I also liked some of the submissions in the newsletter.

* New house rules, even if I might not use them. The more the merrier.

* The ideas put forward by other DQ fans, always a good read

* It was the only DQ news available for a long time and

I believe it is good to continue to reach as many people as possible.

Especially to make the people aware of what is going on and keep them interested, keep the flame alive, we never know, DQ may be published again one day.

* People contacts, new e-mail friends. Updated info sharing from others.

Something to look forward to. Something with which I can contribute to and share my info.

* Very readable, and very high signal to noise ratio, especially compared to news. High even to other mail-forums.

* The articles are interesting, but not always terribly useful -

to be honest, I quite often don't use the rules for several sessions at a time anyway - but its good to hear what other people are doing w/ DQ.

* Filling in of little details (ie the cost of a harp!!) to help

the game run smoother. Ideas for, and links to , scenarios and mini-adventures

* The calm level of discussion, and tight focus on the topic.

* Reminds me of the good 'ole days.

* The new info on various aspects of the game, and what others have been trying.

* Finding out about other DQ players around the world, and what they're doing in their DQ universes.

* Decent, complete articles. Editorial content.

* There is always some item of information which may be useful for an idea, if

nothing else. When a version of a skill

is put forward, and somebody does not like it, then they may write and publish their own version. It encourages people to think their views through and develop articles which may benefit all players of the game.

* Knowing that there are other people out there still interested in DQ as I am. The continuing discussion of spells and changes to the game to maintain its playability.

* One of the few forums left to get information on DragonQuest. Allows fans

of DQ to see other peoples ideas and rules.

* I enjoy reading the debates on how certain ambiguous aspects of the game are interpreted by different people, as well as the modifications and additions other people have made to expand the pre-existing game in their campaigns, all in a format I can keep permanently archived.

The thing I find least useful about the DragonQuest Newsletter:

* It comes out infrequently

* Formatting has to be redone each time I get it. I also would like to see more modules.

* The real "fringe" additions to the game.

* Timeliness, or lack thereof. The main reason I suggest going to listserv format.

* Long intervals between issues. New monster species

* It's hard to have on-going discussions with a newsletter of irregular publication, which is why I'd prefer a listserv.

* Some of the Rules expansions, or rules clarifications, actually contradict legitimate DQ rulings (for example, Gerry Klug clarified the minimum required MA some years ago, declaring that neither the Ritual Purification nor Ritual Preparation are included in the min. MA required.

The reason being that, despite their names, they are not actual magical Rituals, requiring no FT to perform nor having any chance of failure. They are simply 'Lore' that all Adepts learn.)

Some editorial commentary from someone familiar enough with the rules to note such errors may be useful.

Also, lack of an annual index to the Newsletter makes finding articles difficult.

* I would like to hear more about the legal status of DQ. What can we do with the game and where can we take it, e.g. can we publish a new version of the rules?

* Long-winded letters.

* I don't find those articles which attempt to alter or replace preexisting rules of the game, rather than merely build upon them. Additions into the main mechanics I also find untrustworthy. The exception to this is new colleges of magic or spells, which are sometimes interesting.

* To much of junky monster ala AD&D and such.

CENTAURS AS PLAYER CHARACTERS

— Craig Brain

<cjbrain@bigpond.com>

A centaur character has the potential to be a powerful member of any party, they are fast and strong and very perceptive. They also have a number of downfalls, they enjoy the company of the opposite sex and wine too much and have difficulty in obtaining suitable armor and accommodation. They do not enjoy spending long periods of time in cities or in confined areas. If roleplayed correctly, a centaur character will provide a complex and entertaining character that will be an asset to any party, if they can keep him or her out of trouble.

[xx] A centaur is a being that is half man and half horse. They are human down to their hips, but they join the body of a horse where the neck would normally be.

Traits: Centaurs cannot resist alcohol and become violent when drunk. Centaurs are extremely proud and easily offended. They will only

rarely allow a human to ride them, and only then at pressing need. They eat raw flesh (including human flesh, in the case of renegades). Renegades have been known to abduct human maidens for food and other purposes.

Special Abilities: 1. If a Centaur takes the ranger ability and specializes in Plains or Woodland environments, he expends two-thirds the normal Experience Points to progress Ranks. 2. If a centaur takes the healer skill, he expends one-half the Experience Points to progress in Ranks. 2. If a centaur becomes an Adept of the College of Sorceries of the Mind, he expends three-quarters the Experience Points required to progress in Ranks. 4. A centaur finds it difficult to resist alcohol and has only one-half the tolerance for it that a human does. 5. A centaur character starts with Rank 1 in Longbow. 6. Centaurs must make a Willpower Check if they are goaded or challenged in any way or they will become enraged. This will automatically fail if they have been drinking. 7. Centaurs must make a Will Power check to resist a pretty face and will try to impress members of the opposite sex with their prowess, speed, skill with a bow, etc. It is a well-known fact that centaurs tend to be outrageous flirts. 8. Centaur armor prices and weight are tripled due to the extra materials required. Barding is not a suitable substitute for centaur armor. 9. A centaur's hide absorbs 3 DP.

Characteristic	Modifier
Strength	+4
Manual Dexterity	-2
Agility	-2
Magic Aptitude	-3
Fatigue	+5
Willpower	+1
Perception	+5
Physical Beauty	-2
Tactical Movement Rate	+3

— Craig Brain
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TRUESILVER OR PLATINUM?

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TRUESILVER OR PLATINUM?

An Attempt to Resolve the Inconsistencies Between Rules 29.1 and 81.1

According to [29.1] of the DragonQuest rules, “There are three types of metal that can be combined with cold iron” for the purpose of neutralizing it: “silver, gold, and truesilver.

Articles made from these substances will be equally as effective as items made only of cold iron, but will cost much more. An item made of silvered metal costs 10 times the normal cost for the item made simply of cold iron. A gilded item will cost 120 times the normal cost for the item made of cold iron alone. Truesilver will cost 180 times the cost of the item made from cold iron alone.”

One might conclude from this data that gold is worth approximately 12 times as much as silver, and that truesilver is worth one-and-one-half times as much as gold (or 18 times as much as silver). Consulting the respective values of precious metals according to [81.1] of the DragonQuest rules, however, the astute observer will notice an odd discrepancy. Four coins are listed: the Copper Farthing, worth 1/4 as much as the Silver Penny and weighing 4 ounces; the Silver Penny, weighing 1 ounce; the Gold Shilling, worth 12 times as much as the Silver Penny and also weighing 1 ounce; and the Truesilver Guinea, worth 21 times as much as the Gold Shilling (or 252 times as much as the Silver Penny) and weighing 2 ounces. According to [81.1], 1 ounce of gold is worth 12 ounces of silver, exactly as [29.1] suggests. But 1 ounce of truesilver is worth 151 ounces of silver, where

[29.1] would have us believe it to be worth only 18!

How can one resolve this obvious discrepancy? The answer is found in [81.1] itself. “The Platinum Shilling (P.S., weighs 1 oz.) is not in regular circulation, and is worth *one-and-one-half* times the value of a Gold Shilling.” In other words, 1 ounce of platinum is worth 18 ounces of silver. It seems clear then, that the “truesilver” described in [29.1] was actually intended to be platinum!

Why the confusion? One can only speculate, but when I began playing DragonQuest back in 1982, I had not yet read J.R.R. Tolkien's masterpiece, “Lord of the Rings.” Therefore, I had no inkling that “true-silver” was another name for mithril, an imaginary metal of miraculous qualities. In fact, I often wondered exactly what DragonQuest's “truesilver” was supposed to be. It seems possible (however unlikely) that the game designers in charge of the Second Book (or at least [29.1]) were also confused, and believed truesilver to be an old name for platinum. Or perhaps it was simply a scrivener's error.

Whatever the source of the error, it is clear that [29.1] should be read as describing the neutralizing effects of silver, gold, and platinum (rather than truesilver) with respect to cold iron. Which leads us to another tantalizing question: what then, would be the effect of neutralizing cold iron with that most precious of metals, truesilver?

One answer is that truesilver will not, in fact, neutralize cold iron at all. This interpretation is supported by the fact that [29.1] itself says, “There are three types of metal that can be combined with cold iron for this purpose: silver, gold, and [platinum].” The cautious GM may wish to leave things at that. But others (myself included) will be

drawn to the possibilities afforded by truesilvered weapons and armor, so I submit the following characteristics for the reader's consideration.

An item made of truesilvered metal costs 1500 times the normal cost for the item made of cold iron alone. "Silver and gold only partially neutralize the effects of cold iron, but [platinum or] truesilver entirely neutralizes it. The Cast Chance of a character in contact with cold iron neutralized by silver is reduced by 10. The Cast Chance of a character in contact with cold iron neutralized by gold is reduced by 5."

Furthermore, truesilvered weapons and armor are practically unbreakable; a truesilvered weapon is never subject to the possibilities of breakage outlined in [17.3] (but may still be accidentally dropped or deliberately broken, although only with considerable effort), while truesilvered armor is not subject to a reduction in its Protection Rating as a result of Grievous Injuries (see [18.3]). Items made of truesilvered metal weigh roughly two-thirds what equivalent items made of cold iron do.

While these characteristics alone would probably make truesilvered weapons and armor worth 1500 times as much as ordinary steel, truesilvered items also tend to be more receptive to magical enchantment. According to [91.2] of Arcane Wisdom, an Adept of the College of Shaping Magics receives a +5 bonus to the Base Chance of performing any ritual of that college if he spends at least 50% extra on the materials used in that ritual. As only the most potent of magic items will have a modified Cost Factor greater than 1000 (a sword or suit of armor prepared via 91Q-6 would have to have a Shaping Index above 1100, for example), it may safely be assumed that most truesilvered constructions will

qualify for that bonus.

— Cameron King
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AGING IN DRAGONQUEST

—Ted McKelvey
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As my first really successful campaign continued, I wanted to have a set of guidelines for the effects of aging on characters. The result was a simple set of tables for determining what, if any, loss of characteristic points are suffered as a character ages.

I have used these tables in several different ways, including:

Normal aging affects on seasoned, experienced characters.
Determining characteristic modifications for players wishing to start older (more experienced) characters.
Aging affects resulting from some fairly nasty curses and undead, etc...

These tables are designed for common men (humans) with a potential lifespan averaging 70-80 years. The tables require adjustment for longer-lived character races. To use them, simply make the appropriate roll against the affected characteristic while applying the difficulty factor listed. If the roll is successful, no stat loss is incurred. If the roll fails subtract the listed point(s) from that characteristic.

Physical Strength (PS)

Age:	D.F.:	Loss:
30	3	1
45	2	2
60	1	1

Manual Dexterity (MD)

Age:	D.F.:	Loss:
30	3	1
45	2	2
60	1	1

Agility (AG)

Age:	D.F.:	Loss:
30	3	1
45	2	2
60	1	1

30	3	1
45	2	2
60	1	1

Endurance (EN)

Age:	D.F.:	Loss:
30	3	1
45	2	1
60	1	1

Fatigue (FT)

Age:	D.F.:	Loss:
30	3	1
45	2	1
60	1	1

Perception (PC)

Age:	D.F.:	Loss:
30	3	1
45	2	1
60	1	1

Age=years; D.F.=Difficulty Factor;
Loss=Potential Characteristic Loss

Example:

Rolf the Terrible hits the big "3-0" and consults the charts. First he checks Physical Strength. His PS score is 17 and the table indicates a D.F. of 3, giving him a target of 51. He rolls a 50, which narrowly succeeds, resulting in no loss of strength. He then continues through the rest of his characteristics until all rolls have been made and the results applied. He is successful in all his checks, except for Agility. His AG score is 18 and which gives him a target of 54 to avoid the point loss. He rolls a 100, totally missing the mark and incurring the 1 point loss to his Agility. This has the immediate impact of dropping his TMR by 1, not to mention making him a little easier to hit. Rolf decides to spend less downtime in the Green Dragon Tavern and more time training in the local obstacle course (i.e. the woods near town) where he vows to recover his youthful liteness by running, dodging and tripping leaping over tree roots and streams.

I have intentionally left out characteristics such as Magical Aptitude, Willpower and Physical Beauty. In

my campaigns, Magical Aptitude cannot be lost through aging. I don't normally have Willpower subject to aging (How many stubborn old men have you ever known!?), but there are exceptions. There may well be a strong argument for having PB affected ("Is that Angus? The years sure haven't treated him kindly!") but I haven't used it yet.

As I stated above, the tables would need to be adjusted to accommodate longer lived races. A dwarf may not feel the first twinges of aging until he is almost 50 years old.

I hope this is some assistance to you. While I don't use it often, it does add some realism without adding too much extra guesswork.

— Ted McKelvey
<mckelvey@phoenix.net>

v5n01 SURVEY RESULTS

Most everyone who responded was glad to see the return of the DragonQuest Newsletter and wanted to see it continue. We are already at almost 90 subscribers for the renewed Newsletter list, and hopefully more who have changed email addresses will come back over time.

Responses about the formatting of the Newsletter were more varied. The majority of responses to the survey want to see the Newsletter remain in its current format.

Response Breakdown:
The DragonQuest Newsletter should:

- (34) stay as it is, minimally formatted and sent by email with no funky links or other junk.
- (14) become a Listserv so that it doesn't take forever to have a discussion about a topic.
- (10) get with the times and be more graphical, HTML-ized, etc.
- (5) be a web page, and not clog up my mailbox.

Many respondents chose more than

one option, so the totals exceed the number of replies received.

Some of the other comments about the Newsletter format:

"Would it be possible to do a newsgroup?"

"Do a web page Newsletter, and send out email notices when it changes"

"I like a sort of 'official' newsletter, but a listserv would be good, too"

"A listserv, if it can be digested to maybe once a week"

"Maybe a longer list of links"

{Right now, I have included all the DQ related links I know of -RT}

"Have a web page as a companion"

"Replace WebRPG (I don't like that format)"

"A dedicated newsletter with articles such as rules additions, scenarios/campaigns, new creatures, etc. And a listserv for players to discuss ideas and exchange informa-

tion."

"Email primary with listserv as secondary"

"Do links to web articles for expansion on an idea"

At least a couple of respondents suggested releasing the Newsletter in .pdf format (to be read by Adobe Acrobat.

"One thing that would look good on the formatting of the newsletter is to use adobe acrobat. The pdf format is available in a wide variety for different computers, looks extremely good, allows for indexing if you want, and the reader is free for everyone."

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SURVEY v5n02

Please do *NOT* quote the whole Newsletter when replying. Only surveys from subscribers will be tabulated.

1. Your Name/email
2. Please rate the usefulness or interest for you of each article from this newsletter using a 1-5 scale [0=Did not read] where 1 indicates useless and 5 indicates extremely useful/interesting:
 - a. Centaur Player-Characters
 - b. Truesilver or Platinum?
 - c. Aging for DragonQuest
 - d. Please rate this issue overall.
3. What online DragonQuest resources besides the DragonQuest Newsletter do you use? Please rate using the following scale:
[0=Never, 1=Once, 2=Seldom, 3=Occasionally, 4=Frequently, 5=Regularly.]
 - a. WebRPG DragonQuest Forum
 - b. IRC (Internet Relay Chat)
 - c. Yahoo Chat (browser based chat)
 - d. Videoconferencing (CUSeeMe, etc.)
 - e. Usenet newsgroups (rec.games.frp.misc, etc.)
 - f. web pages
 - g. other (please specify)
4. Are you now in an active DQ campaign (yes or no)?