



DRAGONLANCE FORUMS.COM

AD&D Designer Q&A!

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Dragonhelm

11-15-2009 07:18 PM

AD&D Designer Q&A!

Hey, folks, I have a special treat for you guys. AD&D Dragonlance game designers Colin McComb and Tim Beach have agreed to join us for a Q&A session!

Colin was a designer for the Tales of the Lance boxed set, as well as Knight's Sword, Taladas: the Minotaurs, and Unsung Heroes. You can see his various RPG credits [here](#).

Tim was designer for Flint's Axe, has additional design credits for Taladas: the Minotaurs, and was a designer for Unsung Heroes. You can see Tim's various RPG credits [here](#).

Gentlemen, welcome to DragonlanceForums.com!

I'm going to start out with a few questions, and everyone else should feel free to ask their questions as well. Colin and Tim will be able to answer as time permits. I ask that everyone please be respectful of our guests and their time.

1. First of all, how did you two get involved in Dragonlance?
2. Colin, tell us about the Tales of the Lance boxed set. What brought it about? Was it challenging writing a new sourcebook for Dragonlance?
3. What were the design goals of Tales of the Lance?
4. Colin, tell us about writing Knight's Sword.
5. Tim, tell us about writing Flint's Axe. How closely did it tie into Flint, the King? Did you and Colin coordinate on this project?
6. Was there supposed to be a sequel to Knight's Sword and Flint's Axe (Huma's Shield)? If so, why did it never see print, and what would have happened in that module?
7. Tell us about Unsung Heroes. What were your favorite characters to write up?

Okay, everyone, feel free to chime in! Looking forward to Colin's and Tim's answers!

Burren11-15-2009 08:43 PM

Hi Tim and Colin, thanks for taking the time to field some fan questions!

My question is in regard to *Taladas: The Minotaurs*, one of my favorite DL gaming supplements. :D As this book dealt with the minotaurs of a new continent for the Dragonlance campaign setting how freely were you able to explore your creativity when writing up the material and was there any sense of excitement in exploring relatively uncharted territory for one of DL's most iconic PC races?

Thanks again, guys. We definitely appreciate the work you've both done for the setting as well as your other great contributions to gaming!

Colin McComb11-16-2009 04:35 PM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Dragonhelm** *

1. First of all, how did you two get involved in Dragonlance?

When I was first hired at TSR, they assigned me to the Forgotten Realms and Dragonlance groups... but my involvement went back before that, if only from a fan perspective. I started gaming in 1980 when I was a wee sprat (that's a technical term), and collected everything I could get my hands on when I had the money. When I saw TSR was producing fiction by someone other than Gygax (his writing wasn't to my taste), I snatched that up too; I mean, the designer of Ravenloft and the editor of the Endless Quest series? Wow. And that "Wow!" was justified. *Dragons of Autumn Twilight* kicked my pants in.

So when I received my very first assignment, as a very fresh designer straight out of college, and discovered it was Dragonlance, I was delighted. Then I discovered it was *Taladas*, and I realized that all of my background reading was for nought...

Quote:

*2. Colin, tell us about the *Tales of the Lance* boxed set. What brought it about? Was it challenging writing a new sourcebook for Dragonlance?*

*3. What were the design goals of *Tales of the Lance*?*

I hate to bring you down, but my involvement with ToL was mostly peripheral; they gave me the design credit because I kicked around some ideas with Harold and contributed a few paragraphs somewhere in there. I'm pretty sure I threw in an idea or two about the Knights of Solamnia as well, since this was around the time I was working on *Knight's Sword*.

I helped collate (or invent, where they were not previously defined) the calendars of the various cultures, and offered some suggestions for some design issues while Harold talked about the original ideas Tracy had brought in.

I wish I had been more involved; when the box came out, I thought it was a fantastic summary of the original material and a great launching point for what came later.

The design goals of ToL were, as I alluded above, to summarize and collect the material that had been written previously, and to create a singular starting point from which players could embark on a coherent Dragonlance adventure, without having to refer to five different sources at once. How well did we succeed? Well, you'll have to be the judge of that one.

Quote:

4. Colin, tell us about writing Knight's Sword.

This was an incredibly fun project. I was a huge fan - HUGE - of Sturm Brightblade; I thought he was the best character in the original trilogy, and I literally almost cried at his death (Spoiler? Whoops), so I was delighted to get a chance to write up the Knighthood for this module.

First I had to write about how to DM for beginners, though. This whole series was intended to accomplish two things: 1. Ease beginning DMs into game mastery, and 2. Make a damn fun adventure that would make people want to buy more Dragonlance. Accomplishing #1 was easy; I had years of experience in dealing with annoying players (and aren't they all? ho ho ho), and I had various DMGR sourcebooks handy to consult.

#2 was more of a challenge. First, I had to read up on the Knighthood as presented in every source... and I mean EVERY source. There were a few places where the information was directly contradictory, and I had to retroactively shoehorn information together to explain it coherently. I had to refamiliarize myself with all the Dragonlance rules and make sure I used them appropriately.

Also, I wrote myself in as "Kellin Solanius." Now I need to re-read to see if I made myself a good guy or a bad guy (good guy, whew). I added the editor John Rateliff as a senior Knight. Aaand I added some minotaurs from Taladas as a shout-out to my first DL design.

Oh, and my friend David Zenz put together the design for the gnomish death machine, "Knight Squisher". We had some good laughs about that.

As for *Unsung Heroes*: A case where the designers credited me without me having contributed anything significant to the project. I think they copied some of the characters I had created, and had the kindness to thank me for it. I didn't directly create anything for this, but I'm grateful to be associated with it.

-Colin

Colin McComb

11-16-2009 04:51 PM

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Burren** 

Hi Tim and Colin, thanks for taking the time to field some fan questions!

Totally my pleasure. I'm just happy that people are still looking at this work so many years later. So happy, in fact, that I'm going to have to use the Cylon.

:cylon_new

Quote:

My question is in regard to Taladas: The Minotaurs, one of my favorite DL gaming supplements. :D As this book dealt with the minotaurs of a new continent for the Dragonlance campaign setting how freely were you able to explore your creativity when writing up the material and was there any sense of excitement in exploring relatively uncharted territory for one of DL's most iconic PC races?

I'm glad you liked it! :D

The rules for every shared world were/are that we couldn't violate what had already been written. For in-house designers, this was relatively easy - we had access to all the published products, or access to the people who had written them, or at least access to the people who knew people... you get the idea. For freelancers, it was a more difficult situation, because they didn't have that same access and had to rely on the materials their inhouse coordinator could send or else their own libraries. This is a good part of the reason that inconsistencies crept into worlds over time - that, and the basic axiom that everything decays.

However, because this was one of the very first supplements for Taladas, I was one of the first to be able to play in the sandbox. The lack of published material for the line and the bright divider between Ansalon and Taladas meant that I could come up with almost any idea. I've been a big proponent of outside-the-box adventuring, and I *love* building worlds and cultures. Karen Boomgarden, my editor and the leader of the DL/FR team, helped me lead the my very first brainstorming session, and she's the one who came up with the idea that minotaurs would wear nose rings to symbolize their strength and contempt for those who would control them.

I loved working on this. Not just because it was my very first project, but also because, let's face it: Minotaurs are just plain awesome.

I should mention that Tim got his first design credit in Minotaurs - he contributed the monsters in the back, foreshadowing his role as THE go-to monster guy and compiler of the fantastic hardback Monster Manual.

Thanks for the question!
-Colin

Dragonhelm

11-16-2009 10:18 PM

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Colin McComb** 

So when I received my very first assignment, as a very fresh designer straight out

of college, and discovered it was Dragonlance, I was delighted. Then I discovered it was Taladas, and I realized that all of my background reading was for nought...

D'oh! :D

Taladas was fairly fresh around that time, IIRC. I think Zeb Cook had come out with the Time of the Dragon boxed set. What sort of research did you have to do, and how much was just you being creative?

Quote:

I wish I had been more involved; when the box came out, I thought it was a fantastic summary of the original material and a great launching point for what came later.

The design goals of ToL were, as I alluded above, to summarize and collect the material that had been written previously, and to create a singular starting point from which players could embark on a coherent Dragonlance adventure, without having to refer to five different sources at once. How well did we succeed? Well, you'll have to be the judge of that one.

I personally thought TotL was a fantastic boxed set. I have never worn a gaming product out like I have that one! :D

What I liked about Tales of the Lance was that it simplified a few things, and made a few things a little bit more clear. I know that TotL has its critics, but it still stands as one of my favorite DL gaming products ever.

Quote:

First I had to write about how to DM for beginners, though. This whole series was intended to accomplish two things: 1. Ease beginning DMs into game mastery, and 2. Make a damn fun adventure that would make people want to buy more Dragonlance. Accomplishing #1 was easy; I had years of experience in dealing with annoying players (and aren't they all? ho ho ho), and I had various DMGR sourcebooks handy to consult.

Knight's Sword was not only the first DL adventure I ever played, but it also was one that I ran over and over. I even ran it once at GenCon by memory. The info on beginning DMing was a huge help for me.

Quote:

#2 was more of a challenge. First, I had to read up on the Knighthood as presented in every source... and I mean EVERY source. There were a few places where the information was directly contradictory, and I had to retroactively shoehorn information together to explain it coherently. I had to refamiliarize myself with all the Dragonlance rules and make sure I used them appropriately.

This module helped me to get a good feel for the Knighthood. I especially liked the knighting ceremony at the end. Very descriptive, and what a fun way to get a person to become a knight in a special way.

Quote:

Also, I wrote myself in as "Kellin Solanius." Now I need to re-read to see if I made myself a good guy or a bad guy (good guy, whew). I added the editor John Rateliff as a senior Knight. Aaand I added some minotaurs from Taladas as a shout-out to my first DL design.

Kellin Solanius stood out to me as he had all those dogs. That's something you don't see with your typical knights.

Quote:

*As for *Unsung Heroes*: A case where the designers credited me without me having contributed anything significant to the project. I think they copied some of the characters I had created, and had the kindness to thank me for it. I didn't directly create anything for this, but I'm grateful to be associated with it.*

The pregens from Knight's Sword and Flint's Axe are some of my favorites. I've played Erastin Rivenguard from KS and Pentrian the Rabbit from FA, and Karathos has been a good NPC. I think I converted most, if not all, of them to 3.5 and I've begun converting some of them to 4e.

Where did the idea of a minotaur wielding two battle axes come from?

And speaking of characters, talk to us about creating Charles Crownguard. Was it a natural connection, linking him to Derek Crownguard?

(As an aside, Charles Crownguard shows up in an alternate reality in Legends of the Twins, and Karathos shows up in the Age of Mortals era as the guardian of the shrine of Kiri-Jolith in Nethosak. Yeah, I'm sneaky like that. :D)

Dragonhelm

11-16-2009 10:21 PM

Also, I meant to ask you what Thomas M. Reid's role with Knight's Sword was.

Colin McComb

11-17-2009 05:59 PM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Dragonhelm** *

D'oh! :D

Taladas was fairly fresh around that time, IIRC. I think Zeb Cook had come out with the Time of the Dragon boxed set. What sort of research did you have to do, and how much was just you being creative?

In this case, it was the standard "What do I need to know about this setting? What's this Imperial League all about? How far does their influence reach?" I read the Time of the Dragon set, peppered Zeb with questions (the answer to most of which were, "You're creative... what do you think?"). Beyond ensuring the moons were there and the basic rules of Dragonlance applied, almost the entirety of the rest was mine.

Quote:

What I liked about Tales of the Lance was that it simplified a few things, and made a few things a little bit more clear. I know that TotL has its critics, but it still stands as one of my favorite DL gaming products ever.

Any time we had to do a reboot of any campaign setting, there were always huge outcries (huge being relative to the contact we had with the outside world; remember, this was before the Internet was in wide use). I'm not surprised there are critics; many of them have their own good and valid reasons for disliking it.

Quote:

Knight's Sword was not only the first DL adventure I ever played, but it also was one that I ran over and over. I even ran it once at GenCon by memory. The info on beginning DMing was a huge help for me.

Is there "Mission Accomplished" emoticon?

Quote:

Where did the idea of a minotaur wielding two battle axes come from?

Well, there was a certain drow ranger making waves around that time...

Quote:

And speaking of characters, talk to us about creating Charles Crownguard. Was it a natural connection, linking him to Derek Crownguard?

A very natural connection. Derek was a turd in the original trilogy, and his family proved to be similar in later tellings. Adding a poisonous cousin to the mix didn't seem at all out of the ordinary, and tying the module to the Heroes of the Lance was gravy.

Quote:

(As an aside, Charles Crownguard shows up in an alternate reality in Legends of the Twins, and Karathos shows up in the Age of Mortals era as the guardian of the shrine of Kiri-Jolith in Nethosak. Yeah, I'm sneaky like that. :D)

Make sure Charles gets beheaded again. :D

Colin McComb

11-17-2009 06:01 PM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Dragonhelm** *
Also, I meant to ask you what Thomas M. Reid's role with Knight's Sword was.

He was the editor on it. However, I pushed to get him more recognition because he did a fantastic job with Dragon Mountain (my previous project), and I didn't feel he got enough

praise for that. Seriously, Thomas kicked booty on Dragon Mountain.

dead

11-18-2009 04:40 AM

Hi Colin!

What was the reason to release Tales of the Lance in the campaign year 372 AC?

The original Dragonlance Adventures hardcover was set in 358 AC – about 6 years after the war and 1 year after the Legends trilogy.

Was this merely to keep up with the novel line which, by that stage, had advanced the timeline to 378 AC or thereabouts? Or was it to distance PCs from the exploits of the Heroes of the Lance?

I like the 372 AC timeline. Ample time has passed for a second generation of heroes to arise and the world has healed after the war. Adventurers can begin to truly explore the mysteries of Krynn.

Having said that, however, practically nothing happens in terms of metaplot between 358 and 372 AC. The novel line pretty much jumps from the Legends trilogy to the exploits of the Second Generation. So those intervening years would be ripe ground to run campaigns in.

(The recent Eberron campaign setting, for example, is set 2 years after a major war, and it handles the tension of this marvellously. There are old wounds and prejudices from the war, national intrigues, and signs of the conflict on the scarred landscape.)

Thank you

Weldon Chen

11-19-2009 05:29 AM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Colin McComb** »*

He was the editor on it. However, I pushed to get him more recognition because he did a fantastic job with Dragon Mountain (my previous project), and I didn't feel he got enough praise for that. Seriously, Thomas kicked booty on Dragon Mountain.

Well, here's a question. Can you also tell us about making Dragon Mountain? At the time of Dragon Mountain, there were some rumors going around that Dragon Mountain was suppose to be a Dragonlance game. But due to lack of Dragonlance enthusiasm, it was transformed into a more generic product. Draconians in the Dragonlance version were reformed into Dragon-kin. Any truth to this?

Weldon

Tim Beach

11-22-2009 02:02 AM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Dragonhelm** »*

Gentlemen, welcome to DragonlanceForums.com!

Thank you. :) It's good to be here -- sorry it took me a few days to arrive.

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Dragonhelm** »*

1. First of all, how did you two get involved in Dragonlance?

Well ... this is a little embarrassing, but while I was aware of the Dragonlance books and adventures before I went to work for TSR, I hadn't read the books or played the adventures (though I was fascinated by the Tower of the High Clerist in DL8, Dragons of War). I was running my own campaign at the time, and while I lifted bits and pieces from Dragonlance adventures, I was busy making up adventures of my own.

I got into Dragonlance via the Time of the Dragon boxed set. I graduated college with a degree in history, and that set showed how history could really play a part in game design. It also had some incredibly cool character options, like minotaur PCs (which I lifted for my campaign). I was somewhat jealous of Colin's assignment to Minotaurs of Taladas ...

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Dragonhelm** »*

5. Tim, tell us about writing Flint's Axe. How closely did it tie into Flint, the King? Did you and Colin coordinate on this project?

Flint the King was the primary research source that I used for Flint's Axe. The design specs for the adventure referred specifically to the axe used by Flint in the book. I read the book (and I think I made a call to Doug Niles; he wasn't working directly for TSR at the time, but he had helped me get into TSR, and was holding occasional volleyball/barbecue events at his house). I was briefly perturbed when I found out the axe was basically destroyed in the book. There was a moment of "Now what? There's no axe to find!" IIRC, there was a little confusion about which axe was supposed to be the adventure's base -- so, after some research, I decided all the candidates were actually the same axe.

Colin and I coordinated to an extent. After we determined there was really no overlap between the adventures, it was up to us to decide how to create some continuity, which we did by sharing characters (Erastin, Galenye, and Karatho).

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Dragonhelm** »*

6. Was there supposed to be a sequel to Knight's Sword and Flint's Axe (Huma's Shield)? If so, why did it never see print, and what would have happened in that module?

Yes, I believe there was supposed to be a "sequel" called Huma's Shield. I have a vague memory of discussing the characters as a carry-through, that we would use two of Colin's characters, two of mine, and have the designer of 'Shield' create two new characters. Colin and I were part of a move to make new Dragonlance adventures. However, at some point, TSR management decided the new stuff wasn't really making money, and the way to go was to repackage the 'classic' material. The decision must have come after our adventures were published, but before 'Shield.'

The common thread of the adventures was a quest for items, so I assume the third

adventure would have done the same. I don't recall who had the assignment, but I might be able to find out -- I've kept a lot of records from the old days.

More in a moment.

Tim Beach

11-22-2009 02:37 AM

Unsung Heroes

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Dragonhelm** »*

*7. Tell us about **Unsung Heroes**. What were your favorite characters to write up?*

Unsung Heroes had a difficult birth. On the surface, it was a simple idea: have each designer and editor, plus a few others, write up a couple of characters -- many of which came from the collector cards and were already partially done. However, a lot of the contributors got busy, and suddenly, there were almost 20 pages that weren't covered.

I had a little spare time, so I jumped in and started picking up pieces from other people who were too busy. The collector cards had also been a 'jam' product, with people volunteering (or being wrangled) to write some number of cards. I think many of the characters for *Unsung* were written by the same people who had done the cards. And then we ran out of cards. The natural next step was to take characters from *Knight's Sword* and *Flint's Axe*. Then I used the characters from the cover art, and then I made up a few of my own.

I did 21 characters for the book and I had lots of favorites, for different reasons.

* Daviter the Wise and Steveck Uth Drastin were based on the male characters on the cover ... who in turn were painted by artist Robh Ruppel using a couple of our TSR co-workers: David Wise and Steve Beck. The woman on the cover was a model; I'd heard that her name was Kim, so I just extended it a little to get Kimmel.

* Erastin Rivenguard, Galenye Faelern, and Karathos were written by Colin for *Knight's Sword*, then slightly enhanced by me for *Flint's Axe*. Fleshing them out a bit for *Unsung Heroes* was pretty easy from there.

* Colin's other characters (Targin Steelaxe, Jilani, and Siriath Leafwine) and a couple of mine (Pentrian the Rabbit and Obsidian Fireforge) were likewise easy adaptations.

* Fester, Nomscul, and Gilidarius were characters from the books, so the challenge there was to avoid messing them up. Fortunately, the entries were short.

Each of the other characters has a little bit of out-of-game backstory.

* Hetheren was partly based on a woman I had met at a convention.

* Ian Chandler was named for the son of one of my best friends -- and described to look like that friend.

* Selowen was named for Sue Weinlein (now Cook -- Monte Cook's wife), who was an editor at TSR at the time. A version of the same character is mentioned in the *Red Steel* boxed set.

* Klank was the character played by my friend Ky in my campaign, after I started using *Time of the Dragon* as source material. Klank was a happy-go-lucky half-minotaur. I figured that since minotaurs were an ogrish race, and you could have half-ogres, why not half-minotaurs? He looked mostly human, except for his horns and hooves. He wore a special hat to make it look like he had a horned helmet, and big boots to hide the hooves.

* Rikar. In my home campaign, Klank and friends traveled for a while on a ship called the *Constitution*, which had a crew based on the crews from *Star Trek* (TOS and TNG). The ship's 'first wizard' was the minotaur, Rikar. I mellowed and adapted him for *Flint's Axe*, then updated him a little for *Unsung Heroes*.

- * Varga... etc. -- I felt like we needed a tinker gnome in there somewhere.
- * Nerrinth Yd was a similar case; I felt like we needed an irda in the book. I've also always had a little bit of a weak spot for shapeshifters, and a facination with the idea that they might have a set of regular guises that could develop into personalities of their own. So, while I like all of them for one reason or another, Nerrinth Yd is probably my favorite.

Tim Beach

11-22-2009 02:46 AM

Another Credit

By the way, I have one more Dragonlance credit that is not generally known, because I wasn't credited. For Dragon Magazine #192, April 1993, I wrote (with the help of Sue Weinlein) a song called Companions' Rhapsody. :)

Dragonhelm

11-22-2009 10:00 AM

I've determined that we should call this the "Trampas is such a fanboy" thread. :D

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Tim Beach** »

Flint the King was the primary research source that I used for Flint's Axe. The design specs for the adventure referred specifically to the axe used by Flint in the book. I read the book (and I think I made a call to Doug Niles; he wasn't working directly for TSR at the time, but he had helped me get into TSR, and was holding occasional volleyball/barbecue events at his house). I was briefly perturbed when I found out the axe was basically destroyed in the book. There was a moment of "Now what? There's no axe to find!" IIRC, there was a little confusion about which axe was supposed to be the adventure's base -- so, after some research, I decided all the candidates were actually the same axe.

I liked how the axe was tied in with the Axe of Brotherhood. That was a nice way to expand on a classic magic item and flesh it out.

Quote:

Yes, I believe there was supposed to be a "sequel" called Huma's Shield. I have a vague memory of discussing the characters as a carry-through, that we would use two of Colin's characters, two of mine, and have the designer of 'Shield' create two new characters.

Colin and I were part of a move to make new Dragonlance adventures. However, at some point, TSR management decided the new stuff wasn't really making money, and the way to go was to repackage the 'classic' material. The decision must have come after our adventures were published, but before 'Shield.'

The common thread of the adventures was a quest for items, so I assume the third adventure would have done the same. I don't recall who had the assignment, but I might be able to find out -- I've kept a lot of records from the old days.

Dude, I would love to get a glimpse of whatever notes you might have. I've been debating writing the sequel for the Nexus for some time now, but the inspiration seems fleeting at best. I can't quite get things to work out right.

slips Tim Beach a fiver

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Tim Beach** »*

** Daviter the Wise and Steveck Uth Drastin were based on the male characters on the cover ... who in turn were painted by artist Robh Ruppel using a couple of our TSR co-workers: David Wise and Steve Beck. The woman on the cover was a model; I'd heard that her name was Kim, so I just extended it a little to get Kimmel.*

These were three of my favorites. Glad I was right on the inspiration for Daviter. I used Daviter in an alternate timeline for Legends of the Twins as a resistance leader. I've also written up an article on the Nexus about Steveck's order, the [Gold Lancers](#).

I have a way of finding little tidbits mentioned in old gaming materials and expanding on them. :redface:

Quote:

** Erastin Rivenguard, Galenye Faelem, and Karathos were written by Colin for Knight's Sword, then slightly enhanced by me for Flint's Axe. Fleshing them out a bit for Unsung Heroes was pretty easy from there.*

** Colin's other characters (Targin Steelaxe, Jilani, and Siriath Leafwine) and a couple of mine (Pentrian the Rabbit and Obsidian Fireforge) were likewise easy adaptations.*

I always thought that these characters were good pregens, as they were like a family. I've used them quite a bit over the years, and have played Erastin and Pentrian, and used Karathos as an NPC. I'm quite fond of Pentrian, as he breaks the kender mold.

Some of the pregens seem to duplicate roles, such as Siriath and Pentrian. They're different enough that I could see doing that. Why, though, did you introduce Selowen when Jilani was already there? I'm having trouble figuring that one out.

Quote:

** Hetheren was partly based on a woman I had met at a convention.*

If you hadn't already covered Kimmil, I would have said that she was based on the chainmail bikini girl at Troll Lord Games' booth at GenCon. :D

Quote:

** Selowen was named for Sue Weinlein (now Cook -- Monte Cook's wife), who was an editor at TSR at the time. A version of the same character is mentioned in the Red Steel boxed set.*

Whoah. I didn't know that. Now I have to dig up Red Steel. What was the character's name in there?

Quote:

** Klank was the character played by my friend Ky in my campaign, after I started using Time of the Dragon as source material. Klank was a happy-go-lucky half-minotaur. I figured that since minotaurs were an ogrish race, and you could have half-ogres, why not half-minotaurs? He looked mostly human, except for his horns and hooves. He wore a special hat to make it look like he had a horned helmet, and big boots to hide the hooves.*

Huh. I knew he had the bit about "a touch of happiness," but I didn't realize it was to this degree.

Quote:

** Rikar. In my home campaign, Klank and friends traveled for a while on a ship called the Constitution, which had a crew based on the crews from Star Trek (TOS and TNG). The ship's 'first wizard' was the minotaur, Rikar. I mellowed and adapted him for Flint's Axe, then updated him a little for Unsung Heroes.*

So that's where the name came from! Rikar has been one of my favorite pregens. I just dig the fact that he goes against type. A minotaur wizard is a rarity, especially a Red Robe.

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Tim Beach** »*

By the way, I have one more Dragonlance credit that is not generally known, because I wasn't credited. For Dragon Magazine #192, April 1993, I wrote (with the help of Sue Weinlein) a song called Companions' Rhapsody. :)

:bow::bow::bow:

Best Bard on the Run ever!

Cam Banks

11-22-2009 10:01 AM

I believe inserting NPCs from your own campaigns is a tried and true method used by designers for Dragonlance. There are dozens of such characters in the 3.5 Dragonlance Age of Mortals campaign that I added in there because the characters were just so much fun. Of course, the trick is not to make them Mary Sue characters and just dominate the action simply because you like 'em. :)

Cheers,
Cam

Colin McComb

11-22-2009 10:01 AM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **dead** »*

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(The recent Eberron campaign setting, for example, is set 2 years after a major war, and it handles the tension of this marvellously. There are old wounds and prejudices from the war, national intrigues, and signs of the conflict on the scarred landscape.)

Thank you

You've hit it exactly. The novels had moved ahead in time, and so the assumption was that the primary target audience would have moved ahead in time as well. Dropping players into the current novels' past is a straitjacket. Imagine running, say, an adventure based on *Inglorious Bastards*: everyone knows how WWII actually turned out, and no matter how cool the adventure, the people sitting around the table know that their actions don't coincide with canon. It turns into a one-off or a spin-off, an alternate history that's not supported by the official material... and that means that people stop buying the official material.

This is not a good outcome for TSR. :)

I think the set would have been served better by including more details on the metaplot, and filling in those gaps.

Colin McComb

11-22-2009 10:09 AM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **Weldon Chen** *

Well, here's a question. Can you also tell us about making Dragon Mountain? At the time of Dragon Mountain, there were some rumors going around that Dragon Mountain was suppose to be a Dragonlance game. But due to lack of Dragonlance enthusiasm, it was transformed into a more generic product. Draconians in the Dragonlance version were reformed into Dragon-kin. Any truth to this?

Weldon

Not a bit, as I recall. The boxed set was proposed by the AD&D Core group, rather than the DL group, and was always intended to be a generic adventure that could drop in anywhere - thus the planar travel aspect of the mountain.

I'm trying to remember management's attitude toward DL at the time (apart from "More Buck Rogers! Less everything else!"), and my primary memory is that DL was being viewed as a lesser child to FR, which was going gangbusters.

-Colin

dead

11-28-2009 08:54 PM

Hi Colin,

The Planescape book you wrote, *On Hallowed Ground*, features a comprehensive write-up of the Dragonlance pantheon. This is one of my favourite D&D gods books.

What were your feelings, at the time, on how Dragonlance became part of a larger shared multiverse (during 2nd Ed. AD&D) - linked to TSR's other campaign settings - through products like *Spelljammer*, *Planescape* and *Ravenloft*?

I don't think *Tales of the Lance* tried to connect Dragonlance to *Spelljammer* and *Ravenloft* (*Planescape* hadn't been released yet).

Thank you

Colin McComb

11-30-2009 02:31 PM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **dead** »*

Hi Colin,

*The Planescape book you wrote, *On Hallowed Ground*, features a comprehensive write-up of the Dragonlance pantheon. This is one of my favourite D&D gods books.*

*What were your feelings, at the time, on how Dragonlance became part of a larger shared multiverse (during 2nd Ed. AD&D) - linked to TSR's other campaign settings - through products like *Spelljammer*, *Planescape* and *Ravenloft*?*

*I don't think *Tales of the Lance* tried to connect Dragonlance to *Spelljammer* and *Ravenloft* (*Planescape* hadn't been released yet).*

Thank you

In general, I was a fan of connecting the settings, but the particulars made a huge difference. I thought it would be both useful and handy to unite the many worlds under a shared banner. The strategy of creating a pile of worlds was great for our creativity in-house, but it had the unfortunate effect of driving specialized markets for each world, and then fragmenting those markets further with each subsequent release. Having an overall banner made sense to me.

(plus, I've been into world-hopping since before I was a TSR designer)

That being said, I completely got that people didn't want their worlds polluted by a bunch of travelers from other realms. Those of us in the "linking" campaign teams did our best not to interfere with canon from the established settings, and tried to present our stuff as

completely optional for players and DMs in those worlds. This allowed core users of those settings to ignore our campaign settings if they wanted, and an easy integration if they did.

-Colin

The Bandsaw Vigilante

12-26-2009 01:17 PM

Quote:

*Originally Posted by **dead** »*

Hi Colin!

What was the reason to release Tales of the Lance in the campaign year 372 AC?

The original Dragonlance Adventures hardcover was set in 358 AC – about 6 years after the war and 1 year after the Legends trilogy.

Was this merely to keep up with the novel line which, by that stage, had advanced the timeline to 378 AC or thereabouts? Or was it to distance PCs from the exploits of the Heroes of the Lance?

I like the 372 AC timeline. Ample time has passed for a second generation of heroes to arise and the world has healed after the war. Adventurers can begin to truly explore the mysteries of Krynn.

Having said that, however, practically nothing happens in terms of metaplot between 358 and 372 AC. The novel line pretty much jumps from the Legends trilogy to the exploits of the Second Generation. So those intervening years would be ripe ground to run campaigns in.

From what I remember about the dates, the three SSI "Gold Box" computer RPGs (*Champions of Krynn*, *Death Knights of Krynn*, and the *Dark Queen of Krynn*) occur right around this time period, prior to the events of *Summer Flame*, and serve as rather nice bridges between the *Legends* trilogy and that novel.

skathros!

02-23-2010 05:32 PM

Best! Thread! Ever!!!

Skathros

Your friendly neighborhood Dragonlance grognard.

maladaar

07-13-2010 11:33 AM

Huma's Shield

It has been a while (a long while) since I have been on the boards.

Dragonhelm - Did you ever create the Huma's Shield adventure? I am about to search the site.

Dragonhelm

07-21-2010 03:13 PM

Quote:

Originally Posted by **maladaar** 

It has been a while (a long while) since I have been on the boards.

Dragonhelm - Did you ever create the Huma's Shield adventure? I am about to search the site.

Nope, never got it written. I'd still like to, but I'd like for the details to be just right.

All times are GMT -5. The time now is 10:39 AM.

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