

# TALISLANTA

FIFTH EDITION



20 Years... Still No Elves!

R.D. BREEDING '84 ©

TALISLANTA  
FANTASY ROLE PLAYING GAME  
Fifth Edition

# A Player's Guide to Talislanta

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<http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/talislanta-1>

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# CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER ONE: A TRAVELER'S GUIDE TO TALISLANTA</b>	<b>7</b>
An Historical Overview	7
The Regions of Talislanta	10
The New Age to 603N.A.	32
<b>CHAPTER TWO: RULES OF THE GAME</b>	<b>36</b>
Attributes	39
Skills	45
Combat	48
Magic	63
Modes	68
Orders	86
<b>CHAPTER THREE: CHARACTER CREATION</b>	<b>139</b>
Player Character Races	140
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: PATHS</b>	<b>207</b>
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: SKILLS AND QUIRKS</b>	<b>253</b>
Skills	253
Quirks	271
Master Skills List	285
<b>CHAPTER SIX: EQUIPMENT</b>	<b>287</b>
Weapons & Armor	290
General Equipment	307
<b>INDEX</b>	<b>320</b>

## A WORD FROM "THE CREATOR" – STEPHAN MICHAEL SECHI

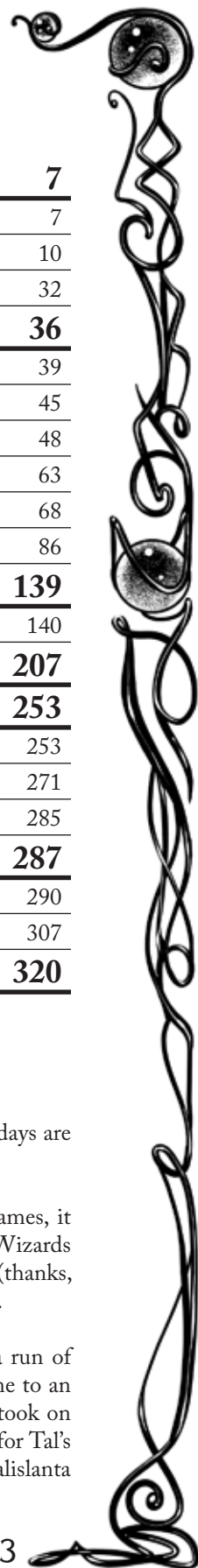
It's been 20 years since the Talislanta RPG was first published by a small company called Bard Games, way back in 1987. Unfortunately, Bard Games only lasted a few years before it went out of business. Luckily, despite a few near-death experiences, Talislanta is still around.

Looking back on things, "luck" may well be the reason for Talislanta's continuing existence. The first lucky break came when my good friend, Joel Kaye, volunteered to put up the money to publish Talislanta after Bard Games changed ownership. The second break came when we published the first Talislanta books during the the RPG boom of the mid-1980s, when even small game companies like Bard could sell

more than 5,000 copies per title (alas, those days are long gone).

After the unfortunate demise of Bard Games, it was lucky that a then-struggling named Wizards of the Coast was there to license Talislanta (thanks, Lisa), and publish even more Talislanta titles.

Following the WotC era, Talislanta had a run of bad luck (and bad licensees) that luckily came to an end thanks to Shooting Iron, which boldly took on an old RPG, published a massive blue tome for Tal's long-suffering fans, and created the first Talislanta website (thanks again, John and Jon).







When SI closed down, Talislanta was lucky that Morrigan Press came along to publish a whole new line of books and supplements—including this 20th Anniversary, 5th Edition of the game. Thanks to Scott Agnew, his people, and everyone who contributed to this version of the game.

Talislanta has always been lucky to have some of the greatest artists in the RPG biz, who together helped define the unique look and feel of the Talislanta milieu. Big thanks here to P.D. Breeding-Black, Ron Spencer, Todd C. Hamilton, Richard Thomas, Larry Dixon, Anson Maddocks, Mark Tedin, Adam Black, and Richard Wallace.

But most of all, from the start Talislanta has been lucky to have had the coolest, most loyal fans in the RPG biz. Without them, Talislanta would have gone the way of the dinosaurs long ago. This book is for all of you, with many, many thanks.

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## ON THE CREATION OF TALISLANTA

*The Talislanta electronic mailing list currently has over 600 members and many have sent questions to Morrigan Press about the early days of Talislanta and how this incredible world came into being. Stephan Sechi attempts to address these queries here:*

The Talislanta milieu evolved over the course of several years, starting with a home-grown D&D campaign that somehow veered deep into uncharted territory, evolved into the Atlantis legends, then somehow took on a life of its own.

The first adventure that ever took place in Talislanta occurred when a Druas NPC (from an Atlantis campaign) led a bunch of (converted D&D) PCs into a strange new world in order to help a wizard hunter track down the reincarnation of an old enemy. That strange new world turned out to be Talislanta, which prior to that adventure had been mentioned once in the three Atlantis books, but never explained—mainly because I had no idea of what Talislanta was at that time. [EDITOR'S NOTE: Interested Talislanta fans may want to check out *Atlantis: The Second Age*, also available from Morrigan Press Inc.]

The real work on Talislanta started after I quit my day job (don't try this at home, kids), stopped working as a musician, and started putting in 14-hour days writing, taking notes, and drawing hundreds of character and creature sketches. My main objective was to create a fantasy world that was not based on European mythology, as most other RPGs had done; hence the "No Elves" slogan, which we used in Talislanta ads that we later ran in *Dragon Magazine*.

I read all of Jack Vance's *Dying Earth* books, Lovecraft's *The Dreamquest of Unknown Kadath*, Marco Polo's *The Travels*, and back issues of *Heavy Metal* magazine (especially Druillette's *Salambo*, in which if you look closely enough you might find the inspiration for the Jhangarans). And I confess to partaking of one of Turkey's finest products nightly, which helped inspire most of the visual elements of Talislanta, and some remarkably lucid dreams I had of actually visiting Talislanta.

I got the idea for Tamerlin from *The Travels*, which made me think that a fantasy version of Marco Polo might make a pretty cool character; he became the

narrator for the first Talislanta book, *The Chronicles of Talislanta*, and made writing creating the milieu even more fun. It took about two months to write *The Chronicles*, then another month or so to write the rule system and *Naturalist's Guide*.

The inspiration for specific Talislantan creatures and races is almost impossible for me to pinpoint. Most started with a rough idea which then evolved into something more elaborate; most of the better ideas came to me once I began drawing design sketches, which I always did late at night (in a not-exactly-smoke-free environment). Some, such as the Tarkus and Bodor, were musical in-jokes. The rest came from years of reading comic books, fantasy and sci-fi novels, history books, *Heavy Metal*, and the hundred or more old issues of *National Geographic* that someone left in the apartment I'd moved into.

The first party of adventures created for a Talislanta campaign was comprised of a Thrall, a Cymrilian Wizard, a Jaka, a Sarista, and a Dhuna. Over

the course of a year or so they had the fortune (and occasionally, the misfortune) of meeting such luminaries as Tamerlin, Crystabal, Shadowmoon, Rune, and an assorted cast of Rajan assassins, Aamanians, Phantasian Dream Merchants, Bodor, Beastmen, Za, Orgovian traders, and just about every hostile life-form on the continent. All survived, and we all had a great time while play-testing and fleshing-out the world of Talislanta.

Lastly, some folks wanted to know if I was still keeping any parts of Talislanta secret, and if I have any plans to release those secrets. The best answer to that question would be to say that I still have some ideas that I never had a chance to explore, and that I hope to do so someday. The *Midnight Realm* book was one of them; other *Unknown Lands* would also be fun to get into, time permitting. If I do, I promise you'll be the first to know. :)

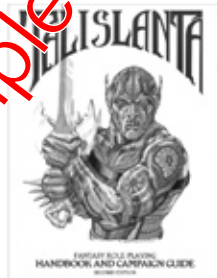
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The Chronicles of Talislanta  
Bard Games 1987



First Edition  
Bard Games 1987



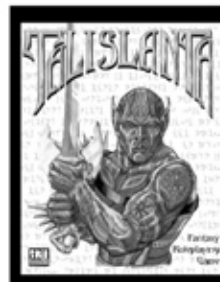
Second Edition  
Bard Games 1989



Third Edition  
Wizards of the Coast 1992



Fourth Edition  
Shooting Iron 2001



d20 Edition  
Morrigan Press 2005



Fifth Edition  
Morrigan Press 2007

## Twenty Years of Talislanta





