



THE BOOK OF EXPERIMENTAL MIGHT

A sourcebook by your request

BY MONTE COOK

Requires use of the Third Edition rules.

This book utilizes up to 75% material from the v. 3.5 revision.

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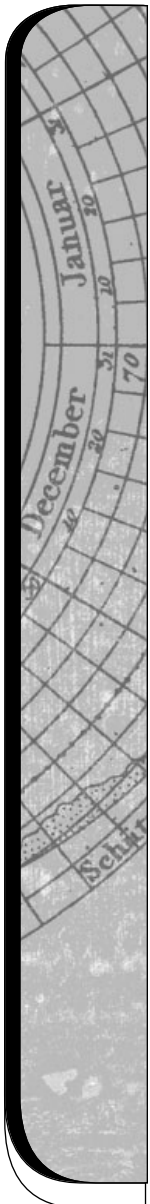
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One More Time

I had thought I was done. I had righted the wrongs done to me, achieved the victories I strove for, bested those foes that deserved it, and in the end spared a few that seemed worthy of such consideration. Some thought I had grown soft by that time. But my adventures were complete. My traveling days were done. I had accomplished more than any mortal dared dream. I had held the very stars in my hands and crushed empires beneath my heel. I had forgotten more magical lore than most arcanists had ever contemplated. Although lesser, unenlightened folk thought me arrogant, surely I had earned a respite from petty struggles and the conflicts of younger mages—had I not? Yet I found that even I was not entirely master of the Fates—no, not even lord of my own. I discovered that I must take up my shadowstaff and leave my otherworldly island home one last time. The multiverse would experience the might of its most terrible son once more.

—Malhavoc

I simply cannot stop tinkering. I suppose it's in my nature. Even when the rules work just fine, I like to experiment with them and see what other options are available. It's fun. *The Book of Experimental Might* is the result of that tinkering. To tell you the truth, I never intended these rules to be published. They were created for my own games. But I did discuss them in my online journal at <www.montecook.com> and on the message boards there, and a lot of readers told me they were interested in learning more. In fact, the response overwhelmed me. So I compiled this book by putting together the new stuff I had created with some stuff from my previous products. This is very important in my current campaigns.

One of the main concepts explored throughout the material in this book is the idea that the game's magic system embraces twenty levels of spells, not just nine. This is an old idea, stemming from conversations during the 3rd Edition design process about the many meanings of the word "level" in the game. Really, it just makes sense to offer magic-using characters twenty levels of spells—it's easier to remember that a 13th-level character can cast up to 13th-level spells, not 7th. You'll see that the material in several chapters of this book speaks to this idea.

More than any of my previous roleplaying books, this one is very conversational in tone and relaxed in nature. It comes purely from my own games that I run for fun, not for playtesting or any work-related endeavor. This is really just one gamer talking to another here, nothing more.

OVERVIEW

This book is basically a collection of house rules that follows the general structure of the 3rd Edition *Player's Handbook* and other variants like *Arcana Evolved* and other Books of Might from Malhavoc Press. Here's a chapter-by-chapter rundown of the contents:

Chapter One: Classes—This chapter presents a new class, the runeblade, and modified versions of the other core spell-casting classes. The modifications in large part take advantage of new aspects of the game presented in this book, such as the twenty levels of spells described in Chapter Five.

Chapter Two: Skills—Here you will see a few skill-related rules alterations, such as background skills and techniques for identifying magic items. This chapter also introduces variant versions of a few existing skills.

Chapter Three: Feats—This chapter offers a new, more generous method for gaining feats, in addition to a number of new feats and updated versions of core feats.

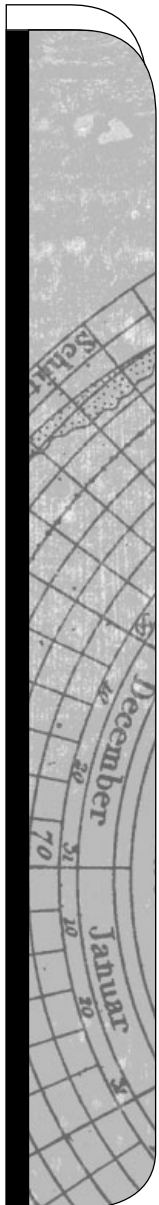
Chapter Four: Playing the Game—This section includes new rules and alterations that affect the play of the game, mainly related to health and combat.

Chapter Five: Magic—The largest chapter in the book offers new rules for magic, in particular material to help flesh out the concept of offering twenty levels of spells rather than nine. Many spells presented here originally appeared in *Monte Cook's Arcana Evolved*, *The Complete Book of Eldritch Might*, or *The Book of Hallowed Might*. Others are modified forms of spells from the Core Rules.

Throughout *The Book of Experimental Might*, all references to spells, feats, and other rules not in this book come from the v. 3.5 revision of the three Core Rulebooks: the *Player's Handbook*, DMG, and MM. This sourcebook is protected content except for items specifically called out as Open Gaming Content on the title page. For full details, please turn to the Appendix on page 84. Open content is not otherwise marked in the text of this book.

USING THIS BOOK

Even though this book may seem like a hodge-podge of various rules, I encourage you to use its contents as a cohesive whole in your games, as much of it interrelates. For example,



the disciplines in Chapter One rely on the idea that all characters get a new feat each level, as described in Chapter Three. The new metamagic feats in Chapter Three depend on the twenty-level spell progression to function. And so on. So, if you decide to pick and choose rules from this book to use, do so carefully.

Because this is a book of my own house rules, I've annotated it heavily—much more than I usually do—to show you not only what rules I have changed, but why. You'll find numerous asides, many of them set apart as sidebars, that explain why I use a particular new rule or suggest some things to consider if you're thinking about using it.

In retrospect, maybe I should have done more of this in my previous books. On some level, I suppose I always thought it was fun for readers to look at a rule and figure out on their own why it was (or maybe wasn't) a good idea. Lots of author notes and commentary can get heavy handed. In fact, as strange as it may sound, I loathe reading most designer's/author's notes or behind-the-scenes commentary. In many cases, these notes become a self-aggrandizing opportunity to bash existing rules, and nobody wants that. Mostly, though, I never wanted my designer's blather to get in the way of

the actual rules. I write sourcebooks, rulebooks, and adventures to be *used*, not just read, and when you're trying to reference a rule or an encounter, a lot of talk muddles things up.

Talking here about what this book *is* reminds me of what it is *not*. It is not an indictment on the existing rules at all. There is no presumption here that these changes are better than the Core Rules. They merely exist as an alternative—a change of pace. An experiment. Something for you to play around with, particularly if your group has been using the existing rules for a long time and you feel like mixing things up a bit.

In many ways, the rules here are very generous and make characters more powerful across the board. Of course, what's good for the PCs is good for the NPCs, too. As I've pointed out to my players numerous times, I love making NPCs with all the extra feats (see Chapter Three). The goal, however, is simply to make things more fun. These rules and changes address what the game has become after so many years of play, and—just as importantly—what we've all become: players and DMs who have lots of experience with the rules.

Monte Cook

February 2008

Contributors to *The Book of Experimental Might*

About the Author

Monte Cook has worked professionally in the game industry since 1988 for companies including Iron Crown Enterprises, TSR Inc., and Wizards of the Coast. He is a codesigner of *Dungeons & Dragons*® 3rd Edition and author of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. He has designed dozens of popular roleplaying books through his own company Malhavoc Press and also has authored miniatures games, novels, comic books, and short stories.

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Malhavoc Press

Malhavoc Press is Monte Cook's d20 System imprint devoted to the publication of evocative game elements that go beyond traditional fantasy. Malhavoc products such as *Ptolus*, Monte Cook's *Arcana Evolved*, and *The Complete Book of Eldritch Might* exhibit a mastery of the d20 System rules that only one of its original designers can offer. Current titles are available to purchase in print or electronic (PDF) format at www.montecook.com.

Classes

Anyone with experience in esoteric matters knows that the practice of magic takes many forms. Spells are only the most obvious and straightforward way to harness arcane and divine power. Runes, disciplines, magic items, rituals, skills, and inherent abilities are other ways—each with its own set of attendant strengths and weaknesses.

—Malhavoc

This chapter presents some exciting new options for various magic-using core classes. Traditional clerics, druids, and wizards have been heavily modified to utilize twenty levels of spells rather than just nine. In addition, these classes—as well as the paladin and ranger—have been adjusted to allow for the introduction of magical disciplines.

You won't find full versions of any of these classes in this chapter, but instead you'll see guidelines for revising each one in play. Consider this chapter more of a guide to changing the core classes for your own games the way I have in mine.

The changes to these classes form the crux of much of the material in this book. The fact that the alternate cleric, druid, and wizard use twenty levels of spells affects many other aspects of the game, so all the material presented in later chapters stems from the assumption that the twenty-level spell progression is in place.

Please note that the class revisions offered here are designed to *replace* the core versions of those classes. They do not supplement them, nor should they be used in addition to the core versions.

In addition to the modifications to various core classes, this chapter contains one new class in *venterity*: the runeblood. This nonspellcasting class is designed for you to add to any campaign.

CLERICS, DRUIDS, AND WIZARDS

This section describes a new way of handling the major spell-casting classes in the game: clerics, druids, and wizards. The flavor and basic mechanics (Hit Dice, saving throws, base attack bonuses, etc.) do not change from what you see in the Core Rules. Everything that *does* change is described here.

- Clerics, druids, and wizards can cast spells of level 1 to 20. The spell levels correspond exactly to their experience level. Spell lists and descriptions appear in Chapter Five: Magic.
- These classes also gain special magical abilities called *disciplines*. Disciplines—abilities spellcasters can use whenever they wish—replace all level-based abilities the classes normally would gain. Thus, clerics do not gain the Turn or Rebuke Undead ability, although they can choose the Turn

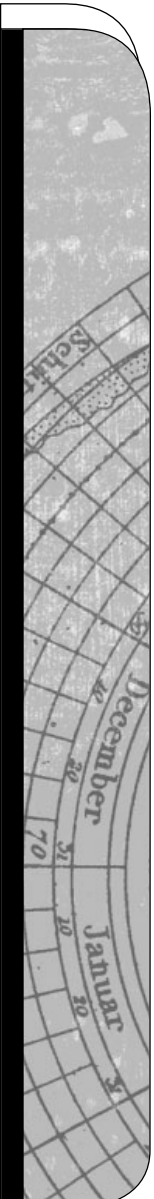
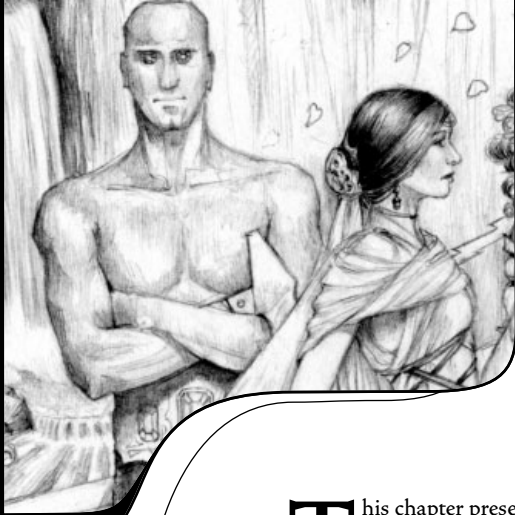
Undead discipline instead. Druids gain disciplines instead of class abilities like Animal Companion, Nature Sense, Wild Empathy, Woodland Stride, Trackless Step, Resist Nature's Lure, Wild Shape, Venom Immunity, A Thousand Faces, or Timeless Body. Wizards gain disciplines instead of Summon Familiar or bonus feats, including Scribe Scroll. Disciplines are detailed starting on the next page.

- There are no 0-level spells.
- There are no specialist wizards.
- Clerics still get domain spells and abilities as described in the Core Rules. They receive domain spells at odd-numbered levels; for instance, at 1st level, a cleric gains a domain spell that appears in the Core Rules as 1st level, as normal. Then he gains the Core Rules 2nd-level domain spell at 3rd level, the Core Rules 3rd-level domain spell at 5th level, and so on through 17th level.
- To learn, prepare, or cast a spell, the caster must have a key ability score (Wisdom for clerics and druids, Intelligence for wizards) of 10 + half the level of the spell, rounded up.
- The saving throw DCs to resist spells are 10 + half spell level (rounded up) + key ability modifier (Wisdom for clerics and druids, Intelligence for wizards).

Twenty Levels of Spells

The various components of the twenty-level spell progression are found throughout this book. For more details, reference these sections and page numbers:

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Cleric disciplines | 6 |
| Druid disciplines | 9 |
| Wizard disciplines | 12 |
| Paladin disciplines | 17 |
| Ranger disciplines | 18 |
| Bards and sorcerers | 21 |
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| Druid spell list | 41 |
| Wizard spell list | 44 |
| Spell descriptions | 50 |
| Magic items | 82 |



Sample file

SPELLS BY LEVEL

| CASTER LEVEL | SPELL LEVEL | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 1 | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 2 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 6 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 7 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 8 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 9 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 10 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 11 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 12 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 13 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 14 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 15 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | — | — |
| 16 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | — |
| 17 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — |
| 18 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | — |
| 19 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — |
| 20 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

SPELLS PER LEVEL

Clerics, druids, and wizards have a new spell level progression, based on the assumption that they can cast spells of level 1 to 20, rather than levels 1 to 9.

Bonus spells from high ability scores remain unchanged. That means a wizard with Intelligence 17 gains bonus spells of levels 1, 2, and 3, even though those levels represent very different spells in this alternate system. (This fact decreases the emphasis of high ability scores in the game.)

Design Decisions: New Spell Progression

This new spell progression plays with the power level of spellcasters a bit. Overall, they end up with more spells once they get to the middle experience levels. Coupled with disciplines, this certainly makes them more powerful than the original versions. However, because they operate with twenty levels of spells, they always acquire their most powerful spells a full level later than previously. Wizards don't get fireball until 6th level, rather than at 5th level like they used to.

While this fact might seem to make spellcasters less powerful than before, it more than evens out in the end. Real game-play impact manifests itself not in the amount of power a character can wield at one time, but in how long the character is able to keep functioning as a viable spellcaster over the course of the day. And, ultimately, it's more fun to keep the game going rather than force it to stop while the casters rest to regain their spells.

CLERIC DISCIPLINES

Disciplines are abilities that clerics can use as often as they wish. Their effects are spell-like abilities, which means they can be dispelled or suppressed. Some discipline effects must be activated as described below, while others—such as Godhammer—function all the time.

Activating a discipline provokes attacks of opportunity. However, some disciplines, like Debilitating Touch, count as armed attacks and thus do not provoke attacks of opportunity when used. Should a discipline effect that normally requires no activation be dispelled, it must be activated using a full-round action to resume functioning.

A cleric chooses one discipline at 1st level; at all even-numbered levels thereafter, instead of gaining a feat at that level, he or she may choose a new discipline or an enhancement to an existing one. (Note that all characters using this book gain a feat each level; see Chapter Three.) Each discipline enhancement has a minimum level requirement as described below.

DEBILITATING TOUCH

Using a free action and at least one free hand, you arm yourself with harmful magical energies. Your next touch inflicts 1d6 points of negative energy damage + 1d6 points per three caster levels. Further, targets who fail a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + half your level + your Wisdom bonus) become fatigued. The damage heals undead creatures, although in a given day you can use it to