



## Introduction

Welcome to the *Compendium of Universal Knowledge*, that is, to myself. I note that you have chosen to use my least expensive, image-only version. Hence you have resigned yourself to enjoying me principally through your sense of sight, although you are, of course, welcome to fondle my creamy, smooth pages and intoxicate yourself on the heady scent of my inks. Perhaps you will also enjoy the musical flopping as my leaves flip and rattle through your fingers, or the reassuring weight of my spine in your lap. Your pleasures are your own, dear reader, I do not judge. I merely speculate....



To business, and briskly: in my current edition, I contain a comprehensive listing of all the major people, places, creatures and phenomena within the *Dying Earth* and also offer the expansions, speculations and comments of other contributors, as well as asides into the Vancean oeuvre. Hence, I should explain my format. My contents occur as a series of cross-referenced entries, arranged in alphabetical order. Each item has a title, a category and page references. A selection of comments follows. The comments divide into **Canon** and **Opinion**, terms that should be self-explanatory, but which nevertheless have their own entries. Most of the opinions are credited to colleagues of mine (for details of whom see **Friends of the Compendium**). A few are by myself. Aside from my own remarks, the veracity and utility of any opinion is a matter for the reader's judgement. Many entries also have Game Statistics or Rumors of Impending Hazard sections; the latter is a florid way of making adventure suggestions.



On the matter of cross-references and citations, readers should note that a word or phrase in *italics* is almost always the title of a book, while items in **bold face** have their own entry. Hence anything that is **bold and italicized** is a cross-reference to a book. Page references to the four volume *Tales of the Dying Earth*, whose American and British editions are identical save for the cover. All entries are also indexed by category, for your convenience.

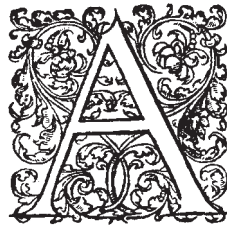


Locations are denoted by their map number and a grid reference which requires but a modicum of intelligence to decode. You will find the maps with other color plates in my middle-most pages.



Finally, my Editor has asked me to thank all my contributors and extend his special appreciation to Carol Johnson and Ian Thomson. Mr. Thomson earns his accolade for a service that was both thoughtful and incomparably useful, but which must otherwise remain between the two gentlemen. And gentlemen, of course, never tell.





## Accic Ocean

*Location*; Page 681

### CANON

In the 16th **Aeon** this ocean covered much of the area to the west of the landmass that would one day become **Almery**. In the 17th Aeon a general rising of the land drove it further west before it returned once more in the 18th Aeon.

### OPINION

The above is the gist of what the **sandestin Osherl** told **Rhialto**, who set the matter down in a brief monograph, which I have read, and which I have filed appropriately, unlike those imbecilic students who cannot even place something in alphabetical order.

Quirethomble, Librarian, the Scholasticarium, Kaiin  
That conservatory at which I studied under Phaetis for one hundred years faced the Accic Ocean. Contemplation of the movement of the water was one of those tasks set us to achieve the mental calm necessary for the summoning of madlings and sandestins, and even now I sometimes find myself looking out across the Accic Ocean in my dreams, the light fresh scarlet and bright enough to sting the eyes.

Issapinai, Arch witch favored of the Goddess Phaetis



## Achernar

*Location*; Page 140

### CANON

According to the old reckoning,\* Achernar is the brightest star in the constellation Eridanus. The name, which is of Arabic origin, means "the end of the river" and the star marks the southern extremity of the constellation at a declination of -57°. Achernar

\* Astronomers are people of ingrained conservatism and it is considered by some that, rather than change the information pertaining to a star, they will instead rename a star whose data best fits their star catalogs.

is a type B star; these stars have surface temperatures in the range 11,000 - 25,000 Kelvin and are bluish-white in color. It has a magnitude of 0.5. The star, or perhaps the system that surrounds it, is the home of creatures such as **Firx**.

### OPINION

Astonishingly, **Larval Age** astronomy doubted that type B stars could have planets.

The Compendium



## Aeon

*Technical Term*; Pages; various, particularly 681, but see also 591-2 and 661

### CANON

The preferred term for the **Dying Earth's** historical eras, Aeons (unlike Vance, DERPG capitalizes the word) are divided into **epochs**.

### OPINION

Deriving from the Greek *aion* (age), aeon simply means an indefinitely long period of time, although geologists employ it to denote a span of a billion years. The reader might, therefore, feel that it is unlikely that Vance uses it in this sense, given that items from previous Aeons are present in **Cugel's** day, although they could have been transported to the future through time travel.

In fact the canon, the text suggests a far shorter span; combining information from **Lehuster** and an unnamed **Last Kingdom** Arch-priest, we learn that there are at least 11 epochs in an Aeon, and that an epoch comprises a hundred centuries, that is 10,000 years. Thus an Aeon should be around 110,000 years long. Indeed, **Osherl** tells **Rhialto** that, in the 17<sup>th</sup> Aeon, a land bridge rises across the **Straits of Garch** and that the **Santune Sea** slowly dries out to become the **Tchaxmatar Steppe**. This argues for time-spans of this order. This would, of course, mean that when Cugel travels 1 million years back in time, he ends up in the 14<sup>th</sup> Aeon.

Gersen the Rationalist



Da, High Meadow, Kaiin, Lake Island, Lavraki Real, Low Meadow, Manse of Mazirian, Miir, Modavna Moor, Octorus, the Omona Gap, the Place of Whispers, Porphiron Scar, Quanorq, Sanra Water, Sanreale Bay, Sfere, Tenebrosa Bay, Thamber Meadow, Thrume, the Ts River, Were Woods, Wheary Water and Wilda Water.



beneficial trading agreements evolve. It is likely that part of the reason why robber asms do not automatically slay their victims is in order to cultivate a relatively benign presence in a region and avoid evoking armed response or fearful avoidance – which would disrupt their business.

Robber asms may be enticed into regular conversation and clearly possess a different level of intelligence than their more bestial counterparts. In particular, the robber asm has a solid conviction that its presence and behavior in the world is part of the Law of Equivalence – in that its relative successes make up for the treatment and poor social condition of half-men the world over.

Even if a traveler has no ill intent, it is nevertheless wise to approach asms cautiously. Around their dens, asms may place deadfalls, spiked pits, branch-spear traps and the like. Some are designed to capture their foes, others to slay or disable. When exploring a likely area for prey, the asm also uses net-traps and

#### OPINION

Perhaps the most sophisticated part of our ancient world, Ascolais still has considerable areas of wilderness, from the empty hills to the south near **Fader's Waft**, to the sorcerer-haunted forests of the north. Be that as it may, when most civilized people use the term Ascolais, they tend to mean the **Scaum** Valley downstream of the junction of Scaum and **Ts**.

Volune Stinobric, Guardian of the Sacred Flowers of Falgunto Beloved Ascolais, my home, for return to which I have faced all the perils of journey from far **Mahaze**, crossing tundra and mountain and forest on foot that I might once again gaze on the beauty of white-walled Kaiin beneath high Porphiron Scar. In Ascolais, a poet may be a poet, a man a man, and if the inhabitants are somewhat listless and not universally cultured, they are at least rich in incident.

Mortiquan of Kaiin, Last Poet, Gold-Bearded Seer of Fair Ascolais, Thrice-Myrmalt

#### Asm

*Creature; Pages 528, 530 ff.*

#### CANON

The asm is a **demon-insect** cross. They are primarily black in color, humanoid with compound eyes and possessed of other insectoid features such as their grinding mandibles and bristling antennae. In many specimens several large fangs protrude from the mouth, with as many as eight being recorded. They are known in **Ombalique** and especially the **Plain of Standing Stones**. When full grown, asms are confident of victory in single combat against an armed opponent.

#### OPINION

Asms, who have spread into both **Ascolais** and **Almery** from the **Land of the Falling Wall**, are sometimes capable of considerable understanding, including such concepts as symbolism and theology.

Members of the more intelligent subspecies of asm have unusually human sensibilities, and sometimes rob victims without killing and eating them as well. No one is sure why some asms behave in such a human-like way. Some not only covet goods and foodstuffs but also engage in smuggling and resale, and sometimes even fight with crude weapons. One imagines that at first their human accomplices were reluctant to trust their intentions; and only after recovering from their surprise at remaining undevoured did some kind of mutually



*The asm is a demon-insect cross, primarily black in color, humanoid with compound eyes.*



coexist in three-dimensional space; looking at mundane reality while wearing **violet cusps** allows the viewer to see the overworld version.

Despite his fondness for terms like **demurge** and **demon**, Vance never refers the underworlds as hells, nor does he identify the overworlds with heaven. Nevertheless, the overworlds look very nice through violet cusps.



## *Cugel's Compendium of Indispensable Advantages*

*Book*

A supplement for the **DERPG**, *Cugel's Compendium* offers a comprehensive, concentrated and concise selection of tweaks, **cantraps** and other items of interest to **gamers of quality and taste**.



## Couch

*Item, also Technical Term; Pages 10, 65, 180*

CANON

In addition to preferring this word to *bed*, Vance employs it in the more euphemistic – if somewhat French – sense of *to have sex with*.



## *Cugel's Saga*

*Book*

*Cugel's Saga* is the third book of the Dying Earth sequence, and the longest.



## Critically Praised

*Technical Term*

This phrase, and its close cognates, indicates that critics of note enjoyed and approved of the publication in question and said so, either in print or online. We also use it more loosely to indicate when a game writer of note (or even one who is the object of reverence) said nice things about the game to us at convention stalls. Almost all **DERPG** material has received this accolade.



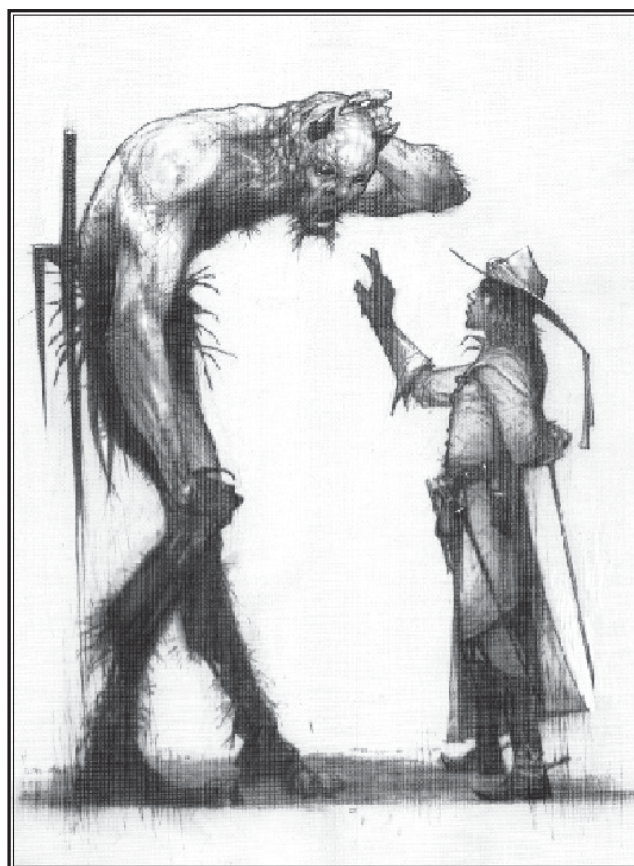
## Cugel the Clever

*Personage; Pages 131-576*

CANON

Cugel the Clever is the protagonist of *The Eyes of the Overworld* and *Cugel's Saga* and is, according to **E. Gary Gygax**, an inspiration for the Thief character class in the *Dungeons and Dragons* game. Despite his self-selected cognomen, Cugel is not in the slightest bit clever; rather he bumbles about as fate directs.

Cugel's game statistics appear in **DERPG**, pages 155-6.



*Cugel is not in the slightest bit clever; rather he bumbles about as fate directs.*



Given that T'sain asks **Turjan** whether he will find her a steed like T'sais' (at which he chuckles), it seems that the **magician** grew one for her in a **vat**.

Gersen the Rationalist



## Houlart

*Personage*; Pages 710, 736, 738

### CANON

A **wizard** named in conjunction with the **spells Blue Extractive** and **Visceral Pang**, Houlart is otherwise unknown; he does not, for example appear in the list of mages on 584.

### OPINION

Houlart was a magician of the 17th **Aeon** who specialized in law enforcement. His spells, of which only two remain, are both useful for the capture and chastisement of felons. The wizard's entire oeuvre included spells to inflict a schedule of punishments, from the temporary removal of limbs, members of organs, and the inability to metabolize certain substances or feel specific emotions, right the way up to spells that separated the criminal into mortal and tormented parts. I have read that Houlart also pioneered the development of the **Charm of Forlorn Encystment**.

Gersen the Rationalist



## Houlart's Blue Extractive

*Spell*; Page 738

### Canon

**Morreion** casts this spell at a castle on **Jangk**; he felt it would compel the occupants to leave.



## Houlart's Preterite Recordiums

*Item*; Pages 710, 713

### CANON

These, or at least the one that **Rhialto** acquired from the **archvult** Xexamedes' adjuncts, are convoluted bronze horns, apparently a bit like a French Horn or tuba, that, when pressed, emit specific sounds.



### OPINION

Preterite, from the Latin *praeterire* (to pass) refers to a past action or state. Once you know that, the preterite recordium is obviously a device that plays previously recorded sounds. The one that Rhailto found, before he was disturbed by his servitor **Puiras**, was a sibilant whispering.

Gersen the Rationalist

### RUMORS OF IMPENDING HAZARD

Preterite recordiums do indeed emit specific sounds, most of which are nonsensical and not terribly interesting. Nevertheless, they were very useful in their day; Houlart developed them to record confessions and interrogations, and they served equally well for the preservation of memoirs, and thus are fine **maguffins**. The PCs discover a recordium that describes, albeit sketchily, the location of a sealed vault which, in turn, contains other recordiums that hold further information.



### HOULART'S BLUE EXTRACTIVE

**Range:** Sight

**Duration:** Instant

**Difficulty:** Complex

This spell effects all residents of one location, such as a castle or a cavern system; the caster need only see the entrance. Its effect is to require everyone inside to make a **Wherewithal** roll at a levy commensurate with the caster's level of success (2 for **Hair's Breadth**, 5 for **Prosaic** and 10 for **Illustrious**). All those who fail must immediately vacate the premises.

### HOULART'S VISCERAL PANG

**Range:** Near

**Duration:** Instant

**Difficulty:** Straightforward

This spell inflicts immediate and uncomfortable intestinal spasm on its target. Although the actual description of the effect is best left to the GM, in **DERPG** terms, the Visceral Pang so discommodes its target that his next roll is at a Levy of 10 and a Penalty of 2.