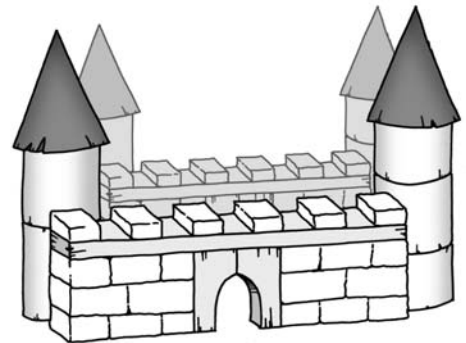


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**GURPS** System Design ■ STEVE JACKSON  
**GURPS** Line Editor ■ SEAN PUNCH  
 e23 Manager ■ STEVEN MARSH  
 Page Design ■ PHIL REED and  
 JUSTIN DE WITT

Managing Editor ■ PHILIP REED  
 Art Director ■ WILL SCHOONOVER  
 Production Artist ■ NIKOLA VRTIS  
 Indexer ■ NIKOLA VRTIS  
 Prepress Checker ■ MONICA STEPHENS

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 VICKY "MOLOKH" KOLENKO

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# INTRODUCTION

This resource for *GURPS Fantasy* campaigns provides adventure seeds, curious characters, and unusual artifacts. Some are trivial items, useful as red herrings and humorous diversions. Others are objects of staggering power.

Because they vary greatly in clout, cultural assumptions, and tone, not all of these items will be suitable for every campaign. You might employ them when the adventurers travel to lands (or worlds) beyond the usual campaign setting.

## LANDS BEYOND

Many of the entries refer to unfamiliar nations, lands, and peoples. Most are the fantastic or mythologized equivalents of actual places and cultures on medieval or ancient Earth. The intent is to provide a bit of color, cultural background, and legend-quality “weight.” The GM should substitute his campaign’s equivalent.

A brief description of these lands follows; they are tagged with the letter of the entries in which they appear.

The default location for the entries is a region of European character. Lacron (V), Norfon (C) and the homeland of Count Vanderlan (V) are small kingdoms. The port of Erutappet (F, T) is located on the east end of the Mediterranean.

The kingdom of Moranx (U), the necropolis of Nehr (D), and the city-state of Salybos (N) are long-lost ancient places, located in the equivalent of Mesopotamia. Larshum (H) is a later Middle Eastern kingdom; it is a sometimes rival of Cheo (H), a stand-in for ancient Egypt.

The Leopard Emperor’s lost realm (G) thrived long ago in central Africa.

In Central Asia, or its equivalent, can be found the plains of Doromi and Kyangi and the city of Kanost (J); the home village of Condor Boy (K, L, O, Y); and the mountains from which Guruka Hemay (B) stages his raids. The Silk Road (called here the “Spice Trail”) passes not far from these places, as well as the remote Panner Wastes (L) and the monastery of the Xao-Qui Brotherhood (X).

Nian-Cho (F, H, I) and Arowundee (B) are Asian nations. Su-Dwar (A) is an isolated archipelago as far to the east as you can go without going off of the edge of the map, and possibly the edge of the world. It is a stand-in for Japan; not the actual place, but how it might have been imagined by a 15th-century European eager for tales of curious customs and fabulous treasure.

### Who Is This Kid?

Pick a child at random, and ask him if he has heard about Condor Boy. He’ll look puzzled . . . not because he doesn’t know *all about* Condor Boy, but because it’s hard to imagine anyone who *wouldn’t*.

This book assumes that every country in the campaign has its own Condor Boy stories. Many are variants of local legends and tall tales. But one adventure – Condor Boy’s journey to the far edge of the world – is told everywhere, and it is not a story; it actually happened, ages ago. The celestial beings who sent him on this quest gave him many magical gifts. Several of these boons are described here (see pp. 18-19, 23, 33).

The wild land where the Coyote Helm (C) was discovered was home to warring empires with an ancient pre-Columbian flavor. This is also the location of “.” *Is for Full-Stop Drum*, found in *Pyramid* #3/1.

## LANDS BEYOND BEYOND

A few entries (E, Q) refer to the Celestial Sphere. The stars, planets, comets, and other heavenly bodies float through this unearthly realm. It is also home to a civilization of beings who direct heavenly phenomena. While they are of a higher order than earth-bound humans, and receive directions from the gods, these “celestials” are not divine in nature.

The Celestial Sphere may be literally up in the sky. This is likely the case in cosmologies involving flat earths and enormous turtles. Reaching the place could require a magical ladder, a flying carpet, or a harness tethered to a flock of swans.

The Celestial Sphere could also be a parallel plane whose objects magically correspond to heavenly bodies. In this case, a Gate spell will be required to send Essum the star pilot (and the burned-out star Shemhault; see pp. 9-11) home.

Condor Boy (see box) visited many fantastic places during his adventures, including the Gates of Night (through which the sun passes at dusk) and a monastery floating beyond the edge of the world. Like the Celestial Sphere, these could be an integral part of the campaign world’s cosmology . . . or may only exist in a parallel world of myth and legend.

## LANGUAGES AND CULTURAL FAMILIARITY

The Cultural Familiarities of NPCs list generic “real world” equivalents. When an NPC’s native culture is long gone, there still may be some circumstances in which he benefits from his experience; some things never change. The person also knows enough about life in the old days to get a small bonus (+2) for the default History skill for that time and place.

Some characters are listed as knowing a *lingua franca* or a *trade language*. A *lingua franca* is a widely used language known by scholars, leaders, and educated merchants. In classic times, Greek was a *lingua franca* all around the Eastern Mediterranean. Latin had its time in the sun in medieval Europe.

A *trade language* is a tongue used by a region’s merchants. It may be a pidgin, creole, or simplified dialect of a formal language. Sailors and port city street urchins may know a few words of it. Arabic was a trade language from North Africa to Malaysia for centuries; Persian was useful along the Silk Road. Spanish was a trade tongue in the age of sail; English is a trade language of sorts today.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stefan Jones has been writing adventure gaming material since 1981, including *GURPS MacGuffin Alphabet*. His life has been uneventful, except for the time a bum tried to set him on fire. He lives in a suburb of Portland, Oregon.