Dragon noir 2 — The Trial

The Cry Havoc game system, which has proven itself through several historical titles, now enters the realm of medieval fantasy with Dragon Noir. The Trial, the second installment of this four-part adventure, has just been released. This is sure to appeal to many role-playing game enthusiasts.

All good things come to those who wait! The second episode of the adventure by Dragon Noir is here!

In the Cry Havoc lineage

Cry Havoc has always enjoyed a diverse audience. This original game, appealing to both beginners and experienced players, owes its simple operation and visual appeal, along with its human scale (1 pawn = 1 man), to arousing the interest of wargamers and roleplayers alike. Before discussing the specifics of Dragon Noir, a brief reminder of the basic system of this hybrid game.

Each pawn has a combat (defense and attack) and movement potential, and an indication of whether it wears armor. The illustration shows its health status (healthy, wounded, stunned, or dead), and whether it can, in addition to melee combat, use a throwing weapon (crossbow, javelin, knife, etc., but especially short and long bows - to be carefully identified before starting to play). Each human character has a name, which makes them more engaging.

The number of game turns is limited in some scenarios, but most of the time, the game ends when one of the two sides has reached its victory conditions.

The game turn is organized into different phases:
1) Player A's offensive turn
2) Player A's movement and player B's defensive fire
3) Combat
4) Player A's characters, knocked out (during the previous turn), wake up

Summary of The Cry Havoc System Game Elements

Game Names: **Map Titles**
Cry Havoc: The Village, The Crossroads.
Supplement: The Forest.
Siege: The Castle, The Fortified Camp.
Supplement 1: The Templar Castle (2 cards).
Supplement 2: The Fortified Medieval City (4 cards).
Samurai: The White Dragon Village, The Temple.
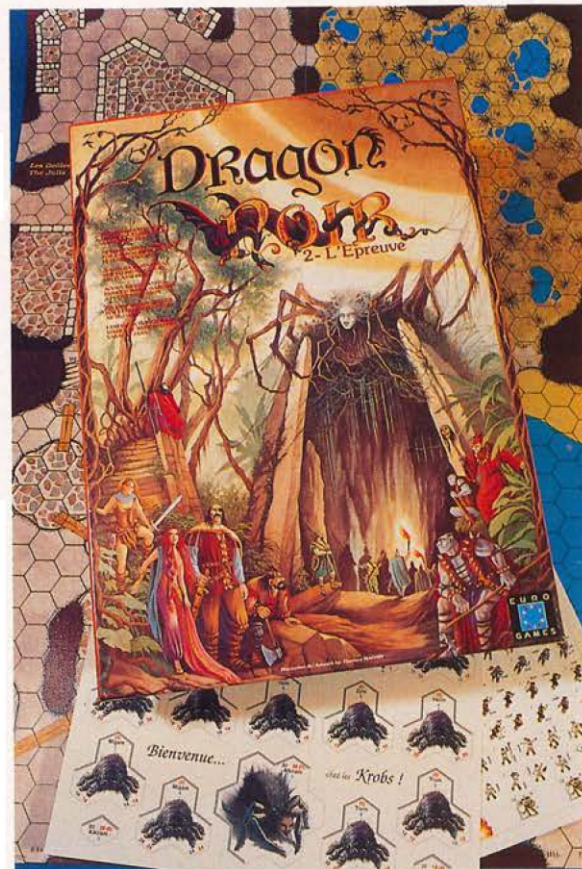**Croisades:** The Oasis, The Olive Grove.
Vikings: The Abbey, The Watchtower, The Promontory, + 2 Sea Caves.
Dragon Noir:
- **Exile:** The Enclosure, The Mill, The Dwarven Cave*, The Dragon Lake*.
- **The Trial:** The Ghost Bridge, The Underground Island, The Labyrinth*, The Haunted Swamp*, The Gaols*, The Pit*
*Half-sized underground maps are not tactically compatible with outdoor maps.

Player B then follows the same procedure. Shooters equipped with the most effective weapons are the most penalized in their movement and rate of fire. Thus, crossbowmen can only fire one shot per turn (offensive or defensive). This action deprives them of all movement.

Characters can move by consuming the movement points listed on the token they represent. There are no zones of control per se, but rather the act of moving into squares adjacent to an enemy.

All things come to those who wait! The second episode of the adventure proposed by Dragon Noir has arrived.

There is often a (random) risk of being injured or even killed. Moreover, during these movements, the defender can choose to intervene with his marksmen at the most opportune moment.

Combat is never mandatory. One character can attack several, and several characters can attack a single character. In this case, the attackers' combat potentials are added together and divided by the defender's defense

strength. A balance of power is obtained, and by consulting the combat table, the result to be applied can be read. Various parameters influence the balance of power: attacking a character with several people, fighting an armored soldier, being on favorable or unfavorable terrain.

We can therefore see that the game mechanics are those of a wargame. However, the use we make of them is no longer so precisely wargaming.

Dragon Noir

With the Dragon Noir series, the role-playing connotation is even more evident, since the characters and scenario settings are classics of the medieval fantasy genre: warriors and magicians exploring monster-infested underground passages. Exile and The Trial are the first two parts of a four-episode campaign. They can be played one after the other, in random order, or separately. Let's now discuss the specifics of The Trial.

— The forces at play. On one side, the good guys: our adventurers from the first episode (Exile) versus the bad guys: Queen Alkiram and her arachnid subjects.
— The setting. Only underground on the six maps provided.
— Magic. Only adventurers have access to Greek magic, their two magicians, whose power is doubled compared to Exile.

— Alkiram, the Spider Queen. Her attack and defense power is monstrous... from the front. But who said you had to attack her head-on? It's so much easier to inflict damage by cowardly striking from behind. But you must expect to see several of your braves fall before you can inflict mortal wounds. Her reduced movement potential doesn't prevent her from turning to face you (rest assured, however, because Alkiram will never be able to change maps, and you will always have a free escape route... or the Queen's guards will be waiting for you).
— The scenarios. In most cases, the Adventurer player must focus their strategy primarily on speed. It is, however, very tempting to, will fight at a distance with their snipers, especially since the arachnids are deprived of them. But Queen Alkiram will lay young krobs every three turns that will inexorably weaken the adventurers' initial power and soon surpass it.

If you want to discover the Dragon Noir series, I paradoxically recommend starting with the Trials scenario. Indeed, this episode has several advantages in terms of simplicity and playability.
-- Obvious distinction (in terms of graphics) between the strengths of the two camps (Adventurer on one side, Arachnid on the other).

— No riders, which saves us most line-of-fire and cover problems.

— A completely underground adventure, so characters use torches to light their way, and killers can only shoot at a maximum of 5 hexes.

— Arachnids don't target any ranged shooters (easier to manage for a complete beginner).

— A completely playable and interesting single-player scenario can serve as training.

If you accept as a premise that chance plays a large role in the outcome of combats (example: in a 3-on-1 fight, an attacker or defender can be injured), I promise you'll have a lot of fun playing The Trial, and you'll be able to easily introduce non-gamers and role-players, especially with the scenario we propose below. What a challenge to try to bring your team back to the light of day, fully assembled.

Claude Renaud

") Wartime of the redundant English fighters giving no quarter.