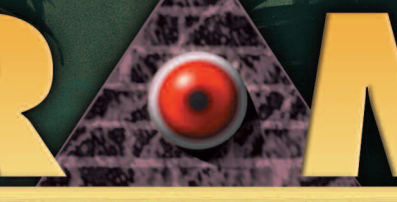


PYRAMID[®]



Issue 3/56 June '13

PREHISTORY

CAVEMAN FUNDAMENTALS

by Michele Armellini

CAVERNS OF
THE CHRONOMANCER
by David L. Pulver

THE OLD WAYS
by Christopher R. Rice

FIRST AND FOREMOST
by Jason "PK" Levine

PAST PRESENTS
AND FUTURE
by Matt Riggsby

WHERE THE SNOW BLEEDS
by J. Edward Tremlett

PREHISTORIC PLOTS
by Megan McDonald

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Face the challenges of the Stone Age.

IN THIS ISSUE

Are you experiencing the dawn of time firsthand, facing savages on unfamiliar worlds, or enduring a mad scientist's Devolution Ray? Then it's time to *bone up* on prehistory!

The best place to start is with the people. Become familiar with typical prehistoric folks in *Caveman Fundamentals*. Written by Michele Armellini – author of several **GURPS WWII** supplements – it includes a new **GURPS** racial template, six new templates for typical TL0 roles, and a new Talent.

Your tribe is ready; it is time to meet the neighbors. Take offerings. Expanding greatly on **GURPS Low-Tech Companion 1: Philosophers and Kings** by that supplement's co-author Matt Riggsby, *Past Presents and Future* provides everything you need to bring gifting economies to your game: game mechanics, adventure seeds, and tips for how to add gifting to other genres.

Time-travel research gone awry? What a perfect foundation for a **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy** adventure! Discover who's living in the *Caverns of the Chronomancer* now (and what they're doing with those sheep) in this month's Eidetic Memory by **GURPS Basic Set** co-designer David L. Pulver. In addition to encounters featuring a handful of new monsters, it includes a full-color map and two play-aid versions for players.

What new secretive terror has disrupted the annual spring gathering? Take your people to *Where the Snow Bleeds*. This **GURPS** adventure outline – suitable for cavemen or those who might aid them – will let you save human history *before* it gets started!

Find more ideas for the earliest adventuring possibilities with *Prehistoric Plots*. It includes a dozen systemless suggestions for adventures before the dawn of civilization.

The Ritual Path magic system from **GURPS Monster Hunters** is a perfect fit for primitive and ultra-low-tech settings. Discover *The Old Ways* with 29 new spells, rules for transferring charms and creating tattoos, a chart for naming exotic plants, and more.

"I invented fire; you probably haven't heard of it." Learn how to gain skills that no one in the history of humanity has ever known – and became the world's first hipsters in the process! *First and Foremost*, an Appendix Z from **GURPS** Assistant Line Editor Jason "PK" Levine, shows you how.

This month's Random Thought Table looks at the joys of knowing the ending, Odds and Ends ponders "modern" stone-age antics, and everyone loses track in *Murphy's Rules*. Don't look for fun in one of those "man caves"; this month's *Pyramid* is the real deal!

Article Colors

Each article is color-coded to help you find your favorite sections.

- Pale Blue:* In This Issue
- Brown:* In Every Issue (letters, humor, editorial, etc.)
- Green:* Columnist
- Dark Blue:* **GURPS** Features
- Purple:* Systemless Features

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FROM THE EDITOR

WHAT DOES IT MEAN . . .

. . . to be human?

Games dabbling in prehistory can get at the heart of that question easier than other genres – at least, when defining some aspects of humanity. Strip away our tech, our social constructs, our deep-dish personal pan pizzas, and you have the specters that have been with us since the before the dawn of civilization. For good or ill, shadows of our primal selves echo to our modern selves, as witnessed in our politics, our interpersonal relationships, and our sporting events.

The thrill of discovering something that feels like it's never been done before. The relief that comes from sating a gnawing hunger through your own efforts and prowess. The inner desire to *create*. The hunger to *destroy*. The terror of not comprehending what lurks beyond the periphery of darkness, your mind racing to come up with an explanation that satisfies your overactive mind. These thoughts – though less distinct than when the world was younger – separate us from the rabbits and wolves that live solely by instinct. The seeds for our own elevation are there from our beginnings . . . as are the sparks for our own destruction.

Going further back, when the world was lush and strange creatures roamed the Earth, our questions change.

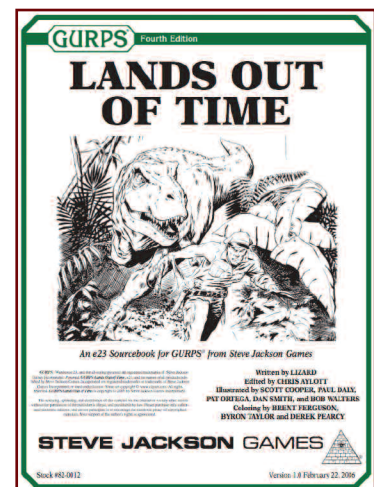
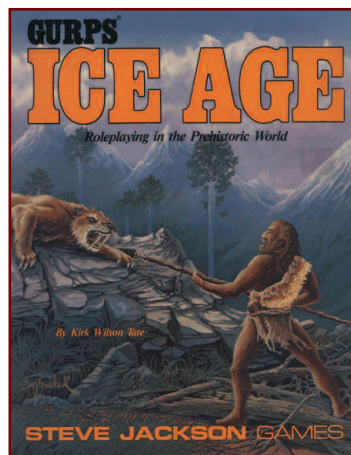
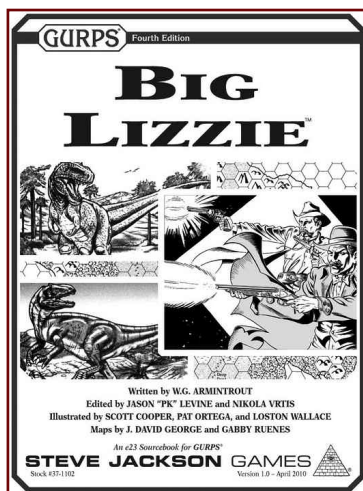
What does it mean to be a Terran?

This alien world – teeming with dinosaurs and a million other extinct creatures, its flora and fauna as deadly and strange as its surrounding terrain – resonates with us today. Dangerous, unforgiving, and scaled in impossible ways . . . who needs planets of fiction? We are all of us from a strange and inhospitable planet, carried by a generational ship that is also our destination.

Prehistory is *our* history. We revel in its excitement, and we forget it at our peril.

WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

Why did our cavemen forbearers develop a scribed method of conveying information in iconic form? So you could write us about your *Pyramid* thoughts! Send us private feedback and insight to pyramid@sjgames.com, or join public the discussion online at forums.sjgames.com. It's so easy, even cavemen could do it!



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Background Skills: 4 points chosen from among Weather Sense (A) IQ [1]-12; any skill not chosen above; or any skill in any other template.

Spells: 14 points chosen from among appropriate survival- and spirit-focused Paths and spells, which will be either (H) IQ+1 [1]-13 or (VH) IQ [1]-12, including +1 from Power Investiture.

* Multiplied for self-control number; see p. B120.

† See *GURPS Power-Ups 2: Talents*.

Lens

Mundane Shaman (-24 points): In a world with no magic, remove Ritual Magic and replace its 8 points with mundane skills chosen from among the secondary ones; also remove Power Investiture 1 and the spells, without replacing them. Channeling, Medium, Oracle, Spirit Empathy, and Spirit-Talker may be inappropriate, depending on the specifics of the setting's supernatural beings. Package 3 is recommended, together with some skills of package 2.

STORYTELLER

30 points

You are the best when it comes to telling tales, reenacting hunts, singing, and generally having a good time around the fire in the evening. You are probably the best teacher for the band's children and the one most likely to know and remember events in the past and present. That may be because you are older than others, or just because you're good at it.

You can't make a living out of this. You also perform some hunter, gatherer, or craftsman tasks.

Attributes: ST 10 [10]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 11 [20]; HT 10 [0].

Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 11 [0]; Per 11 [0]; FP 10 [0]; Basic Speed 5.00 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].

Advantages: Caveman [-5]. • 10 points chosen from among Per +1 [5], Acute Hearing [2/level], Born Entertainer 1 [5]†, Charisma 1 [5], Eidetic Memory [5], Favor [Varies], Reputation +1 (Entertaining storyteller or Knowledgeable elder; Band; All the time) [5], Sensitive [5], Talker 1 [5]†, or Voice [10].

Disadvantages: -15 points chosen from among HT -1 [-10], Compulsive Carousing [-5*], Curious [-5*], Debt [-1/level], Dependents [Varies], Gluttony [-5*], Impulsiveness [-10*], Overconfidence [-5*], Sense of Duty (Band) [-5], or Vow [-5].

Primary Skills‡: 7 points chosen from among Performance or Public Speaking, both (IQ/A).

Secondary Skills: Literature (Oral Traditions) (H) IQ-1 [2]-10.

• 5 points chosen from among Dancing (A) DX+1 [4]-11; Current Affairs/TL0 (Regional), Games (any), or Gesture, all (E) IQ [1]-11; Acting, Poetry, or Teaching, all (A) IQ [2]-11; Musical Instrument (any) or Religious Ritual, both (H) IQ-1 [2]-10; or Singing (E) HT+1 [2]-11.

Background Skills: 3 points chosen from among Acrobatics (H) DX-2 [1]-8; Artist (any) (H) IQ-2 [1]-9; Carousing (A) HT-1 [1]-9; Diplomacy, (H) IQ-2 [1]-9; Disguise/TL0 (Animals) (A) IQ-1 [1]-10; Makeup/TL0 (E) IQ [1]-11; or any secondary skill not chosen above. • 3 points chosen from among any skills listed in the gatherer (p. 5), hunter (pp. 5-6), or craftsman (p. 6) templates.

* Multiplied for self-control number; see p. B120.

† See *GURPS Power-Ups 2: Talents*.

‡ The two primary skills default to each other, and with seven points it is possible to have them both at the same level.

SUGGESTED READING

GURPS Ice Age for *GURPS Third Edition* was used as a key reference for these templates, and it's a great source of additional suggestions for various primitive cultures.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michele Armellini lives in Udine, Italy, with his very understanding wife, Silvia. He makes a living out of foreign languages, but he loves dabbling with and studying the obscure and the uncanny – and trying to convert them into game mechanics! Apart from things he has published in Italian, he has written for *Pyramid*, and he is the author of *GURPS WWII: Grim Legions*. He is also the author or co-author (with Hans-Christian Vortisch) of several other e23 products: *GURPS WWII: Their Finest Hour*, *GURPS WWII: Doomed White Eagle*, and *GURPS WWII: Michael's Army*.

This is a story from long ago, when the great mammoths still roamed our lands. It's the story of my two brothers and me. When the three of us were young, we were taught that the world is full of magic.

*– Denahi, in **Brother Bear***

Roam abroad in the world, and take your fill of its enjoyments before the day shall come when you must quit it for good.

– Sa'di

6. Dinosaur Gate Cave

This room was the wizard's dining room and kitchen. There is a wooden table and two stools in the center of the room, and a shelf with cooking utensils, a fireplace with an iron cauldron and a narrow (1'-wide) ventilation shaft above it. On the east side of the cave is a smashed-in iron door that leads to shimmering rectangular portal. The door was obviously heavily barred, but now it is broken.

If the explorers venture through the gate, the GM can have them find the tyrannosaur on the other side after they discover the grave mentioned below. If they do not, the GM should have the monstrous lizard come through the gate and enter the caverns.

The gate was a permanent gate created by Ilarion. It leads out to a time millions of years in the past, before these caves were formed. The gate opens into a humid forest filled with towering oaks, cypresses, and giant sequoia trees. The forest is alive with reptiles, large insects, but no sizable mammals. If they remain long enough, huge dinosaurs may be spotted moving through the trees. For dramatic effect, the adventurers may quickly encounter a herbivorous creature pursued by a tyrannosaur.

The oxygen in this world is thicker. After a few minutes, suffer a -1 IQ; roll vs. HT to avoid euphoria leading to being Overconfident. It will also dry out eyes (-1 to Vision rolls).

Fifty yards past the gate, something black and shiny can be spotted through the trees. Taking a minute to explore reveals it's a stone slab set before a giant sequoia tree. The marker reads (in whatever local tongue is used by scholars, such as Latin):

In memory of the apprentice Signy Mallorian, slain valiantly defending her master Ilarion against an armored proto-dragon as we explored this world of the dawn.

Rest in peace, loyal servant.

Under 8' of sod is a grave containing a tall skeleton clad in a ragged blue dress and leather boots. Tucked into the robe's pocket is an ivory wand tipped with a opal gem in the robe's pocket (with a 2-point Powerstone; it's worth \$1,000 for the ivory alone).

Proto-Dragon King (Tyrannosaurus)

This 39'-foot long and 15'-tall green-and-brown-scaled bipedal reptile tears at its prey with a jaw full of 6"-long fangs, or thrashes them with its long tail. The creature has only one eye, however, a relic of its battle with Ilarion a few years ago.

ST: 34	HP: 34	Speed: 7.00
DX: 14	Will: 11	Move: 17
IQ: 2	Per: 14	
HT: 13	FP: 13	SM: +5
Dodge: 10	Parry: N/A	DR: 2

Bite (13*): 3d+1 impaling. Reach C.

Tail Swipe (13*): 3d+4 crushing. Reach 1-7.

Traits: DR 4 (skull only); Fangs; One Eye; Sharp Claws; Short, Weak Arms (1/4 ST); Striker (Tail; Crushing; Cannot Parry); Long, SM+1; Limited Arc, Rear Only); Wild Animal.

Skills: Tracking-15.

* Includes -1 from One Eye.

7. Bedchamber (L)

This chamber, illuminated by a red continual light, holds a four-poster bed and thick rugs. The chamber has delighted the cave shaman, and she and her mate Oog were trying out the cave together. Oog is now resting in the bed admiring his mate, while Ika-Loana paints the walls, using her fingers and pots of ash-paste and mashed berries to draw a picture of a stick-figure Oog bashing in the head of a pointy-headed figure (the wizard); she has also drawn illustrations of local sheep and goats. The adventurers may note the style is identical to the cave paintings at the opening Painted Cave.

This bedchamber was shared by Ilarion and (when she still lived) his apprentice/lover, Signy Mallorian. One of two unlocked chests in the room holds the wizard's spare clothes: a tall hat, hooded cap (fur-trimmed, worth \$1,000), a long coat, and a long scarf. Hidden in the back is a bottle of 100-year-old whiskey worth \$400. Beside the bed lies a staff with onyx tip and 20-point Powerstone, which the cavemen took from the wizard. A second chest contains neatly folded women's clothing and shoes of simple but attractive cut (\$500), plus some personal basics including an ivory comb (\$100) and a small silver hand mirror (\$200).

Cave Shaman Ika-Loana

An unusually pretty cavewoman with startling blue eyes emphasized by mask-like black markings around them. Her body is daubed with blue paint. She wears a necklace of animal teeth, strategic bits of fur, and a (currently) sheathed bone knife. Her life-mate, Oog (p. 16) is always near.

ST 11; **DX** 12; **IQ** 13; **HT** 14.

Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 13; Will 15; Per 17; FP 14. Basic Speed 6.50; Basic Move 6; Dodge 9; Parry 10 (Knife). SM 0; 5'5"; 124 lbs.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Animal Empathy; Impulsive (12); Low TL (TL0); Magery 2; Nosy; Proud.

Skills: Artist (Painting)-13; Area Knowledge-11; Brawling-12; Cooking-12; Dancing-13; Hiking-12; Knife-14; Knot Tying-12; Leadership-14; Naturalist-14; Stealth-14; Survival (Mountains)-14; Religious Ritual-15; Tracking-13

Spells: Beast Soother-15; Create Fire-14; Death Vision-20; Deflect Energy-14; Heat-14; Ignite Fire-14; Lend Energy-14; Lend Vitality-14, Minor Healing-15, Recover Energy-15, Resist Cold-14 Shape Fire-15, Flame Weapon-15, Flame Jet-15, Summon Spirit-17, Warmth-15.

Equipment: Bone knife (1d-2 imp).

Summon Spirit Dog

Spell Effects: Lesser Control Spirit + Lesser Create Spirit.

Inherent Modifiers: Area of Effect.

Greater Effects: 0 (x1).

This spell summons a “spirit dog” (or similar appropriate spirit) to watch over a specific area or person. The caster may designate up to five other people, besides himself, as “safe.” If anyone else comes within 10 yards of the designated area or person, the spirit will bark (yelp, screech, howl . . .) loudly, automatically waking anyone within 10 yards. It cannot attack. This effect lasts for the next 12 hours.

Typical Casting: Lesser Control Spirit (5) + Lesser Create Spirit (6) + Area of Effect, 10 yards, 6 excluded targets (11) + Duration, 12 hours (6). *28 energy (28x1).*

Totem

Spell Effects: Greater Strengthen Body.

Inherent Modifiers: Altered Traits, see below.

Greater Effects: 1 (x3).

This spell has several variations (see below), each of which is cast as a charm (usually a piece of the “totem” animal like a bit of hide or a claw). Each spell gives a specific set of traits to the target, which last for an hour.

- *Cunning of the Crow:* Per+2, Common Sense (Conscious), Intuition.
- *Endurance of the Cave Bear:* HT+4.
- *Eyes of the Eagle:* Per+2, Acute Vision+5, Enhanced Tracking 1, Telescopic Vision 3.
- *Lizard’s Renewal:* Regeneration (Regular), Very Fit.
- *Sight of the Bat:* Dark Vision, Robust Sonar, Sonar (Accessibility, Not in water).
- *Skin of the Chameleon:* Chameleon 8.
- *Speed of the Saber-Tooth:* DX+1, Basic Move+2, Enhanced Ground Move 0.5.
- *Strength of the Mammoth:* ST+4.
- *Wisdom of the Owl:* IQ+1, Eidetic Memory, Oracle.

Typical Casting: Greater Strengthen Body (3) + Lesser Control Magic (5) + Altered Traits, 40 points of packaged traits (see above) (40) + Duration, 1 hour (3). *153 energy (51x3).*

Vermin Vamoose

Spell Effects: Lesser Control Mind.

Inherent Modifiers: Area of Effect.

Greater Effects: 0 (x1).

This spell creates a mild mental befuddlement that only affects small (SM -9 or less), nonsapient creatures (IQ 6 or less), causing them to flee the affected area. These effects last for a month.

Typical Casting: Lesser Control Mind (5) + Area of Effect, 10 yards (8) + Duration, 1 month (11). *24 energy (24x1).*

Vision Quest

Spell Effects: Greater Sense Chance + Lesser Strengthen Mind.

Paleolithic Magic

Magic in the Paleolithic (or even early Bronze Age) is probably not geared toward combat. Most spells are going to be about survival. The GM who wants his setting to have Ritual Path magic should probably take a careful look at how they want magic to interact with the setting. The GM might consider making combat and other “flashy” magic Greater spell effects. Players *can* use such magic, but it’s costly and time-consuming. The GM might even extend this to all effects that *aren’t* related to survival, placating spirits, and so on. He could even make it *impossible* for certain types of spells to be cast. For instance, offensive combat magic might be expressly forbidden.

Alternately, the GM might choose to limit the level of Thaumatology available to casters, thus limiting spell’s energy. Another method to differentiate “stone age” magic from its descendent might be to switch Thaumatology for Ritual Magic. This makes magic feel more shamanistic rather than a scholarly pursuit. He could even trade grimoires for special fetish’s that contain a spirit’s essence. Mechanically, such items would work the same (same bonus, cost, and weight) but instead of appearing as books or scrolls, they would be sacred crystals, wands, and so on. The GM could combine several options. For instance, perhaps “stone age” magic uses Ritual Magic instead of Thaumatology as a core skill, and other “flashy” magic are considered Greater Effects and have fetishes instead of grimoires. A GM using a “lost world” scenario might even have higher TL casters. The “standard” Ritual Path magic casters get confused by the shiny rocks the native shamans seem to be toting around . . .

Inherent Modifiers: Bestows a Bonus, Meditation.

Greater Effects: 1 (x3).

Typically cast as a charm, usually on a bundle of objects that represent the person who is to receive the vision. The spell requires the quester to seek a place of solitude to mediate and open himself to the supernatural world. This communing requires a Will-1 or Meditation+5 (whichever is better) roll, and 15 minutes; more time can be taken for a bonus (see *Time Spent*, p. B346). Success provides an honest answer to one question. Failure also gives an answer, but it is at best cryptic and most likely unhelpful. A critical success gives an in-depth answer, while a critical failure means the GM *lies*.

Typical Casting: Greater Sense Chance (2) + Lesser Control Magic (5) + Lesser Strengthen Mind (3) + Bestows a Bonus, +5 to Meditation (16). *78 energy (26x3).*

Wishes for Fishes

Spell Effects: Lesser Strengthen Chance.

Inherent Modifiers: Bestows a Bonus, Fishing.

Greater Effects: 0 (x1).

This spell gives a +5 bonus to all Fishing rolls (regardless of the method used) for the next three hours.

Typical Casting: Lesser Strengthen Chance (3) + Bestows a Bonus, +5 to Fishing rolls (16) + Duration, 3 hours (4). *23 energy (23x1).*

ABOUT *GURPS*

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Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all *GURPS* releases are available on our website – see above.

GURPS rules and statistics in this magazine are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition*. Page references that begin with B refer to that book.

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