UNDERWORLD 3

FALL 1998

ULTIMA UNDERWORLD 3

Design Document

27 AUGUST 97

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INTRODUCTION

What Is *Underworld 3?*

- A fantastic world of adventure, quests and interactivity in a detailed 3D environment.

- A single-player game with more than 20 action-packed levels.

- A multi-player game where you can pit yourself against up to 7 other players via LAN, Direct Connect, Modem or Internet.

- A game you can play for as little as 10-20 minutes, either in the main story or in a randomly generated mission...or else spend days solving a detailed, story-driven quest.

- A phenomenally immersive 3D fantasy world, built on top of the proven *Wing Commander: Prophecy* engine, capable of supporting multiple camera angles and a high density of interactive objects.

- A richly populated play area, combined with an accessible magic system and accelerated character development to provide a better play experience for a broader audience than any previous RPG on the market.

- An important step forward in a mutually productive collaboration between Lord British Productions and Black Ops, demonstrating the ability of development teams within the same studio to work together on the creation of high-end product.

- A product accessible both to hard-core and casual gamers, with variable difficulty levels and automated or customizable stat systems for every caliber of player.

- Origin's premier SKU for Fall 1998

What **Isn't** *Underworld 3?*

- It's NOT filler between Interactive Movies. **This project requires no live-action shoot.** Even computer-generated flics will be kept to a bare-bones minimum, with story development primarily taking place during gameplay itself using our proprietary Animation Story System.

- It's NOT standard Dungeons & Dragons fare. *Underworld 3* features a creative world with numerous original monsters and weapons that push the envelope of the fantasy genre.

- It's NOT a world so enormous that a small army of developers is required to build it. We're focusing on a smaller, more manageable environment that's absolutely loaded with detail and "wow" factor. We're firm believers that Less Is More.

- It's NOT a *Quake*-clone. Although loaded with action, *Underworld 3* features a story, characters and quests that draw the player into a fascinating universe.

- It's NOT a completely new, untested engine with an unpredictable development cycle. By taking advantage of more than 10 man-years of coding effort on the *Prophecy* engine, we're able to create a highly reliable technology schedule.

Why Is This An Origin Title?

- *Ultima* remains one of the premier brands in the computer gaming industry. Origin was founded on the strength of the *Ultima* franchise. The product line, including the upcoming *Ultima Online*, continues to generate tremendous excitement and serious revenue among audiences worldwide. *Underworld 1* and *Underworld 2* are both honored in CGW's exclusive Hall of Fame.

- The project applies ground-breaking technology in a new genre, reinforcing the studio's position in the RPG category.

- The development team is able to work hand-in-hand with the creators of the *Ultima* universe to maintain the highest integrity and entertainment value.

- Recent external development of premium Origin titles have not received the critical praise nor met the revenue expectations they deserve.
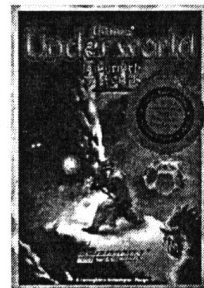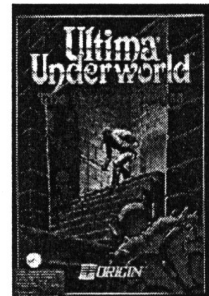
How Is This Different From External Competition?

(Might & Magic 6, Wizardry 8, Deep Six, Dark Project, Lands of Lore II, etc.)

- Multiplayer!!!

- Unique Play-The-Storyline multiplayer option and Co-Op or Head-to-Head or Death-Match multiplayer options.

- *Ultima Underworld I* and *II* have already positioned the franchise firmly in the 3D RPG market and built brand-awareness, while the competition are new to this higher technology genre.

- A dense, interactive environment. Most of the objects in our world can be manipulated, destroyed, moved or otherwise interacted with.

- The detail level will far surpass the competition. Examples include trees with leaves blowing in the wind, books that can be opened and 'read', detailed paintings on walls, etc. Together these details will create a dense environment that establishes a virtual world on your computer screen.

- Rich sound-effects with true 3D positional audio. Even the ambient sounds—crickets chirping, monsters roaring, gates swinging in a storm, etc.—will add tremendously to the immersive feel of the environment.

- Spells and skills are streamlined to a manageable number and accessible through an easy-to-use interface instead of requiring a Masters Degree in Magic.

- Detailed character development that doesn't stop the action dead while you try to figure out how to advance a skill or attribute.

- *Underworld 3* will appeal to the casual gamer, with short cuts and hot keys to allow them to make progress without burying themselves in the manual, as well as to hard-core gamers, giving them the opportunity to dynamically interact with their Player Character and the World at a very serious level.

- Lots of kick-ass action AND a compelling storyline. The best of both worlds…which is exactly what Origin's loyal fans expect and deserve.

How Is This Different From *Ultima 9?*

- An entirely new world, featuring new gameplay dynamics, NPC's, monsters and a fresh storyline.

- Friendlier to the casual gamer—easy to jump into and easy to play.

- Superior 3D, digital audio system.

- Entirely different look and feel to the art, environment and sound effects.

- 6 Degrees of Freedom 1st person POV compared to 5 Degrees of Freedom 3rd person POV.

- Many more underground missions in a dark, distressed and dangerous world.

- The illusion of an entire, realistic world is enhanced by views of the sky and other atmospheric effects compared to a ground view only.

- Multiplayer!!! Unique Play-The-Storyline multiplayer option and Co-Op or Head-to-Head or Death-Match multiplayer options

OVERVIEW

Design Goals

- Renewal of the _Underworld_ Franchise—_Underworld 3_ represents a tremendous opportunity to reinvigorate an existing franchise with a mind-blowing gameplay experience. _Underworld_ is one of the most frequently requested sequels of any Origin products. Our goal is to create a kick-ass game while remaining faithful to the flavor of earlier versions and to the entire _Ultima_ universe.

- Re-use of Technology—Tremendous effort has already been put into the creation of the _Prophecy_ engine. We're taking this work and combining it with advances of our own. Because of the team's close familiarity with the engine, we've been able to focus our design efforts to the engine's strengths, rather than come up with wild features for the game and hope that the technology catches up to us one day.

- Modest World Scope—We're looking to create a rich, super-detailed world that's modest in scope and fully accessible to all classes of players, in contrast to building an immense, lightly populated world that requires a substantially larger number of resources to design, implement and service.

- Full Immersion—We intend for the 3D visuals, lighting and physics to represent an incredible leap in design and technology for titles such as this. Players should feel as if they're really immersed in this unique world.

- Compelling Story—Consistent with all _Ultima_ titles, we expect to take advantage of a strong story-line to draw players into the game and keep them interested for a long period of time.

- Accessible Interface—We plan to include Shortcuts that allow casual gamers to jump right in and enjoy playing the game. At the same time, we want hard-core gamers to have the opportunity to customize and tweak their playing experience to an extreme degree.

- Intriguing Characters—Part of a fascinating story is the development of singular NPCs and monsters with whom Players can interact.

- Wow Factor—The timeline will be structured so that once the levels are "complete", at least six weeks of development time will remain for the team to add cool additions, technical tricks, special effects and other dazzling bits that'll wow our audiences.

- Tie-Ins With _Ultima_ Universe—One of our primary design parameters throughout development will be to incorporate intriguing aspects of previous _Ultima_s within the design and story of this game, without compromising either side. One of the challenges we face is that fact that Britannia is completely destroyed at the end of _Ultima 9_ and most of the traditional characters are either dead or en route to a Happy New Place.

- Non-Linear Gameplay—Provide the player with numerous opportunities to get off the beaten path, explore the world and basically determine the pace and direction of their own adventure.

- Wide Variety of Terrain Types—deserts, jungles, underwater regions, volcanic areas and mountains are among some of the varied areas you'll be able to play in.

Technology

> *Obviously this is merely an overview of the technical side of* Underworld 3.
>
> *The underlying technology of the product will be presented in detail in our Technical Design Document, which you can look for in late September, 1997.*

Rendering

One of the greatest advances in 3D technology in the last few years is now viable in the marketplace. 3D accelerators provide us a high-tech canvas on which we can paint the most extraordinary visual effects ever seen in a PC game.

The Direct3D modules from Microsoft allow the engine to render using any 3D accelerator hardware that supports the Direct3D interface. The advantage this gives us is that the engine will immediately support any future 3D cards with no additional support from us.

We will also support OpenGL, which is being supported by the majority of hardware accelerator manufacturers. (OpenGL is a direct competitor to Direct3D and is garnering increasing support within the gaming and game development communities.)

The native-mode DLLs for 3D accelerators allow us to custom-tailor the game for each piece of hardware, if we choose. Although providing native support for the card does require additional programming efforts, the result is often a superior product since most cards run significantly faster in native mode than under Direct3D.

Our explicit goal is a frame-rate of 20 fps on the target hardware, running under a single resolution of 640x480x16—the resolution most commonly supported by 3D accelerator cards.

Multi-Player

Since the very start of the development cycle, every line of code we've generated has been under the assumption that multi-player support was fundamental to the success of the product. With this in mind, *Underworld 3* always runs on a client/server model—even when you're playing a single-player game.

The result is that if we can demonstrate that the single player game works, by definition a multi-player version will work as well. This allows us to concentrate our development energies largely on the gameplay, content and functionality without becoming distracted by the writing of two separate sets of code—one for single-player and another one for multi-player. While the current engine could support up to N players, for latency and game design reasons, we intend to support a total of 8 players.

> *The various Multiplayer modes, including Head-to-Head and Co-Op Play, are fully described in our forthcoming Technical Design Document.*

Visual Personality Insertion

Utilizing our unique high-end technology, we'll allow you to have a more personally immersive experience. This will be achieved by allowing you to import images, including scanned pictures of yourself—or any image you like—for use on your avatar.

This data will be even passed to other machines in multiplayer games. For the first time in an Origin product, you'll be able to see yourself, or whomever you'd like, running around in side the game environment. For example, just imagine seeing Mike from accounting writhing on the end of your sword! That's an experience to remember!

Level Design

Bottom line—fewer levels, more detail.

In contrast to the usual scheme of things, we're planning for our artists to actually build out each level. Later the design staff will shape the level into a coherent, balanced arena in which to play.

Each level will be super detailed. The terrain will be varied and rich. You'll encounter a lot of touchy-feely effects (e.g., cob-webs on walls that tear away when you walk through them) with a tremendous attention to detail. Generally there'll be a large number of objects in each and every level.

You can also count on a dramatic use of 3-dimensional space. Small, cramped passages will open up into spectacular caverns with soaring roofs. Every area—and the structures within them—will be designed to provide a depth of field and level of detail that sets a new benchmark in the genre.

Beyond the environmental differences in the terrain, the ground level itself will vary from level to level. Look for rocky surfaces, sloping dungeon levels, twisting and turning passages, ramps that rise and fall and everything in between. Our engine allows a wide array of terrain heights and depths.

Look & Feel

The planet on which *Underworld 3* takes place is known as JAAL and differs significantly from Britannia. Instead of shiny, clean world, Jaal is a much more distressed (i.e., dirty), forbidding and haunting environment.

The environment types will run the gamut from desert wastelands, jungles, caves, cramped towers, forests, steep mountains and some underwater levels—each within a contained area to prevent aimless wandering.
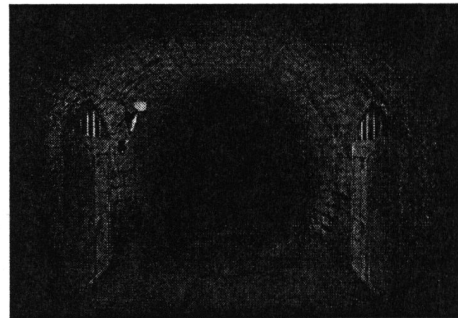
> *In keeping with the traditional* Underworld *experience, approximately 70-80% of all missions and levels will be underground or in entirely enclosed spaces.*

Sound & Music

The principal composer of *Underworld 3* is *Wing Commander* veteran George Oldziey. The team has already worked closely with George on previous projects. We have a unique head-start in musical composition due to the fair amount of themes that were written for the *Silverheart* project and which can be put to good use here with a minimum of alteration.

The sound system will be profiled in-depth in our Technical Design Document. Briefly, the Magi Sound System supports 2D, 3D (via DirectSound3D) and 3-part sounds (a ramp-up, a ramp-down and a looping middle), as well as support for true Dolby Pro Logic Surround Sound. Magi allows digital sounds and streaming audio to be controlled separately.

STORY

Foreword

The *Underworld 3* team feels strongly that a rich story and compelling characters are fundamental to the success of the title. The following section provides an overview of the story and the major plot elements.

Keep in mind that—as with the creation of all stories in every type of media—over time the story will change, advance and finally come together into a seamless whole. Your feedback is always welcome.

A number of people have already helped us refine this story and have contributed immensely to its improvement. We look forward to ongoing suggestions over the course of the next year. Some of those who've taken the time to provide comments include:

Richard Garriott	(EP, Lord British Productions; creator of *Ultima* franchise)
Starr Long	(Associate Producer, *Ultima Online*)
Brian Martin	(Designer, Lord British Productions)
Bob White	(Designer, Lord British Productions)
Andy Hollis	(EP, Skunkworks)
Mike Francis	(Designer, Skunkworks)
Neil Young	(General Manager, Origin)
Chris Yates	(Chief Technical Officer, Origin)
Mike Grajeda	(Chief Financial Officer, Origin)
David Ladyman	(Publications Manager, Origin)
Tuesday Frase	(Writer, Origin)
Melissa Tyler	(Writer, Origin)
Jennifer Spohrer	(Writer, Origin)
Alex Carloss	(VP of Marketing, Origin)
Chris Plummer	(Product Marketing Manager, Origin)
Patrick Bradshaw	(Product Manager, Origin)
David Swofford	(Director of Media Relations, Origin)
Rod Nakamoto	(EP, Maverick/Loose Cannon/Black Ops Productions)
David Downing	(Producer, *WC Prophecy*)
Frank Roan	(Director, *WC Prophecy*)
Mark Day	(Video Producer, *WC Prophecy*; EASM)
Adam Foshko	(Video Director, *WC Prophecy*)
Billy Cain	(Lead Designer, *WC Prophecy*)
Cinco Barnes	(Designer, *WC Prophecy*)
Chuck Karpiak	(Programmer, *WC Prophecy*)
Andy Sommers	(Programmer, *WC Prophecy*)
Rob Irving	(Designer, *WC Prophecy*)
Damon Waldrip	(3D artist, *WC Prophecy*)
Frank Lucero	(Producer, *Privateer 3*)
Mark Vittek	(Lead Designer, *Privateer 3*)

Rich Hilleman	(Executive Producer, EASM)
Keith McCurdy	(Chief Propeller Head, Electronic Arts)
Andrew Corcoran	(Product Marketing Manager, EAUK)
David Byrne	(Head of Product Development, EAUK)
David Gardner	(Managing Director, EAUK
Artie Rogers	(Origin QA)
Robert Windisman	(Origin QA)
Paul Sage	(Origin QA)
Courtney McMillan	(Origin QA)
Michael Pickett	(Origin QA)
Rhea Shelley	(Origin QA)
Todd Bailey	(Origin QA)
Andy Bruncke	(Origin QA)
Reece Thornton	(Origin QA)
Chris Launius	(Origin QA)
Brandon Salinas	(Origin QA)
Kenny Hott	(Origin QA)

Back Story

The context in which the story takes place is helpful both for the development team and for end-users. The back story of *Underworld 3* depicts the many forces at work on this unique portion of the *Ultima* Universe and provides an underpinning for future iterations of the product line.

While not necessary for the enjoyment or completion of the game, the back story is the seasoning that makes the stew all the richer for those who enjoy such things. Major portions of this fiction—probably much changed and much polished—may be available through the log book, manual and/or hint book of the final product.

You'll discover that it's a work in progress, with some significant portions of the pre-history of the story yet to be fleshed out...but that's part of the beauty of the creative process. We expect to be making refinements and improvements in every aspect of the story and gameplay right up until our Beta date.

Introduction

This overview of the back story serves as a general introduction to the world and prevailing forces on the planet Jaal. It's not to be considered a canon history of the world, but rather a collection of the beliefs of the current populace or even a holding place for the myths and legends of their time. As such, it's appropriately vague and symbolic in some places...and overbearingly specific in others.

None of the following information is required to successfully play *Underworld 3*. It exists to provide a foundation for the legends, stories, events, places and characters presently interacting on Jaal. At the same time, a refined and more developed version of this back story will be available to interested players in the form of log entries, books and story-telling sessions by some of the NPCs found in *Underworld 3*.

In the days before the oceans drank Jaal...

From the Void

...in which the world is formed, described and populated

From the emptiness before time came the reality of being—an angry, white-hot surge of existence pushing against the fabric of nothingness.

Tearing a path of righteousness through the stagnant stillness of the void, matter inflicted its presence upon the universe. Wary of its imminent extinction, the Nothing formed a bargain with Matter and the holiest of alliances was forged. Matter would

occupy Space, but the Nothing would live in the gaps between Space—a stoic epoxy for the inconsistent energy of form.

Matter, weary from its fiery birth, and feeling secure in its position after the deal it'd struck with the Nothing, began to congeal and cool. In repose, it failed to notice the changes the Nothing was already making in the agreement, widening the gaps in Space, sowing Veins of Void through the fabric of reality, and forcing Matter into smaller and smaller configurations.

Before it could be stopped, the Nothing had forced the grains of Matter, once a proud desert of reality, into tiny islands of being in an ocean of emptiness. The Nothing had been cruel in its twisted promises and Matter was deeply wounded. But it had plans of its own. Quickly seizing control of the situation, Matter set about reshaping the chaos of the Nothing's betrayal, shaping patterns and inventing the logic of physics.

The Holy Alliance was strained, but a balance had been reached. The Nothing was big, and it had control of spaces in between, but Matter would govern over them both, wielding its influence with the bending of Space. It would hurl its roving watchdogs, the planets, through the Void to enforce the Law.

Perhaps the strangest of all side effects stemming from the Holy Alliance of Matter and Nothing is life—that curious property by which matter breaks from its collective state of existence as a wholly independent being. Stranger still is the concept of sentience, the newly formed independent matter construct that has a concept of self, a separation of its own matter from the matter of its surroundings. As improbable as this oddity should be, it continues to occur, mirroring in its evolution the eternal and primal struggle of Matter against the Nothing…surely the most significant of dramas.

There are many stages on which the scene may set. To those who occupy its surface, none of these is more significant than the hurtling ball of matter known as Jaal.

Of Magic, Ley Lines, and Interplanar Nexi

…in which the Places of Power are described

The Nothing which inhabited everything prior to the coming of Matter is still quite prevalent in the universe. It winds its way around and through everything, leaving holes in reality. These holes are inherently powerful places, acting as loci for the unique energy known as the 'Stream of Life'.

The Energy collects there and flows through the veins of Nothing, taking the path of least resistance through a trillion different worlds on an infinite number of planes of reality. This energy, which is responsible for life itself, can be tapped and channeled by those who know where to find it—and, even more importantly, how to offer it a path of less resistance. This incredible skill is known as magic.

As a backlash to the imposition of order on the universe, the Nothing has etched the surfaces of the islands of Matter, sending the Stream of Life flowing all across them.

These lines of power, known as Ley Lines, are still bound by the laws of matter. Or rather, they're restricted by them into a particular pattern. The result is that the Ley Lines describe a sort of triangular 'mesh' that abstractly covers the surface of a planet. But the Nothing will not exist in and of itself in a bubble, it must reach out to other tentacles of the Void, and so the Veins of Nothing not only encircle planets, but run between them, forming a network of ever larger triangles crisscrossing the planes of reality…and eventually the universe itself. The Stream of Life is free to flow.

These Tunnels of Emptiness can be, and frequently are, traversed by those skilled in the art of Magic. This feat is perhaps the ultimate use of the power of the stream, and it typically requires large amounts of energy. The strongest sources of power come from the areas where the Ley Lines intersect—the Nexi. As such, the Nexi are obviously the places where the tunnels are most easily opened.

The seeds of many things are carried in the flow of the Stream of Life. Among these is the seed of Humanity. It is, in fact, probably the most prevalent of seeds. This is why Humanity is so common among the planets of the universe. An example of Humanity can be found in almost every plane of reality. Therefore it was only a matter of time until the seed of Humanity made its way onto the world of Jaal, and the first Human, Therieem, was born unto the plains of its unblemished surface.

But Humanity was not alone in its struggle to survive on Jaal. Many races existed there, and many continue to exist there, though Humanity is by far the most prevalent. Mankind fought hard to attain its position as ruler of the planet. The legends of the Grand Conquest are strewn with tales of bloodshed and war among the races. From Therieem's Journey to the Place of Others, through Nihalbish's Army Storming the Gates of Rechauter, one can count no less than 700 great wars.

The 28 Cities and the 27 Good Men

…in which Humanity forms a civilization

[This section still under development…]

A council is formed of the first inhabitants. 27 ruling people form the council, each of whom rules and represents one city of humanity. They convene for meetings in the city of Wayreth, the primary city of mankind, which all of them rule together.

The People of Talerius

…in which the Cyclopean Nation is detailed

When the nations of Mankind had taken the plains and the valleys for themselves, the CYCLOPES were little affected. The mountain tops had always been, and always would be, their domain. It was the closest they could physically get to their gods. Each morning and each evening, when the clouds had covered the lowlands in a fine blanket of white,

they knew they truly lived in paradise…for surely no location on Jaal could have offered a more mystical experience.

For millennia the Cyclopes lived in peace. The other races, unable to cope with the air at the higher altitudes, barely knew of their existence. This suited the Cyclopes fine. They seldom traveled down the mountain sides. And why should they? Everything they needed was at hand. When they did travel to the lowlands, they avoided the places of Humanity as much as they could, preferring to deal with other races.

The Cyclopes spent their lives carving the mountain tops into their unique stepped villages, digging temples into the deepest interiors of the mountains themselves. They herd JOCKELHOPS, a hardy, partially domesticated breed of goat-like creatures. And the Cyclopes worshipped their gods.

Cyclopean social and governmental structure developed along peculiar lines, with roots and influences stretching back into the dim clouded memories of their ancestors. In the Cyclopes' estimation, their kind had once populated the lowlands. They were then the rulers of Jaal, and they lived well in cities, as Humanity now lived, dealing in peace with other races. But in their comfort they had forgotten their creator. They had abandoned religion—and their gods were not happy with them.

Gods are never subtle in their more important directives, and the Cyclopean deities were vengeful in the extreme. A plague came down into the lowlands, spreading like wild fire. Three-fourths of the entire Cyclopean civilization died in a fortnight. The medicine men could find no balm or elixir to cure the disease. In their darkest hour, one Cyclops stepped forward with an answer. His name was Talerius, which in the old Cyclopean Common Speech meant, "One who answers the cry of anger."

Talerius, the chieftan of a village otherwise killed off entirely, called upon his neighboring villages to come together with him to perform the 'Rite of the Harbinger'—one of the many forgotten religious ceremonies of their ancestors, this one designed to answer an affliction the people believed the gods were visiting upon them. Skeptical though they were, they had no other options. This was as good as anything. In a time when 8 out of every 10 Cyclopes were dying weekly, of the 380 who took part in the ritual, only 22 died.

When word of this spread, the remaining Cyclopes began a pilgrimage to Talerius, following his lead in the almost-forgotten rites and sermons of the ancients. Within weeks they had crowded out the village he now lived in, while hundreds of other pilgrims arrived each day. At last Talerius called a public meeting and outlined his plans to return to the old ways. The Cyclopes must abandon the lowlands and the cities they'd built, he said, for these were the distractions which had pulled them from their faith. Only by moving closer to their mountain-dwelling gods could they hope to appease the anger of the divine influence. Returning upland was the answer. As his short speech ended, he left the village with nothing but the clothes on his back and headed into the mountains. The faithful followed. There were no more deaths from the horrible plague.

As the years passed and Cyclopes re-settled on the mountains, it became apparent that some form of leadership was required. Due the commandments of Talerius, however, they could not simply return to the governments of the cities. Some new system would have to be determined, and the populace again looked to Talerius. He summoned the will of the gods and began to dictate the divine will. Three chosen Cyclopes would be named in the following days. These three would go even higher into the mountains for several weeks, where they would construct the 'Book of the Law' after repeated channelings of the divine will. The Books of Law would be nine in number, and these nine would be spread to nine mountain temples, around which would be built villages. Each of the nine 'Cities of Law' (or 'Yaghey', in the old tongue) would be governed by the specifics in the Books. Each city would have slightly different laws, designed around fulfilling the wishes of the divine influence and achieving an earthly connection with the mystical.

In order to more fully appreciate the Books of Law and the mystical construction of the soul they represented, over the course of his or her life each Cyclops should live in each of the cities and experience all of the laws.

The Dictate spoke in detail about the potential simultaneous existence of the spirit at multiple physical places—with the help of years of meditation and channeling of the Will, naturally, outlining a spiritual path of evolution for the newly enlightened Cyclopes. But, in the physical dimension, things inevitably took longer to accomplish, especially the complete transmigration of the soul and body.

Through the years, the interpretation of the first Divine Dictate has warped and changed, though it fundamentally remains the same in its intentions.

The Cyclopes still have their Nine Books of Law and the fabled Nine Cities of Law. However, the spiritual and physical evolution of the people hasn't quite come about yet, for most of the Cyclopes, at least. Yet a change in their interpretation of the Dictates has allowed the Cyclopes to still satisfy the Will of the gods.

Cyclopean social and familial structure is centered around living up to this interpretation. Each family is 'Soul Bonded' ('Greay Quisti', in the old tongue) with eight other families. These families are composed in exactly the same way as each other family, all members sharing the same names and times of birth. It is a miracle of social achievement, yet one the Cyclopes could not live without. The rituals of birthing, marriage, procreation and death are profoundly orchestrated acts of devotion and faith—structured always around their Soul Bonded extended family.

The singular Cyclops who has been able to fulfill the Divine Dictate is the Cyclops who returned his people to the Path of the Divine Will. Talerius' achievement of 'Multiplicity', ('Na Quisti', in the old tongue) is marked as the pinnacle of the Cyclopean religious experience. He's the icon and living embodiment of what the race had been divinely ordered to attain.

As strange as it might be for outsiders to comprehend, Talerius has reached that pinnacle of existence to which most Cyclopes can only aspire. In short, he dwells in ten distinct locations. An aspect of Talerius exists in (and presides over) each of the Nine Cities of Law. His 'Tenth Aspect', ('Quisti Hoveel', in the old tongue; poetically translated as the 'soul near god') dwells in the Cyclopean heaven, ('Yurail', in the old tongue)

where it communicates with the gods in a permanent, and much more direct, form of the ritual of channeling the Will.

Though powerful in aspect and sturdy in build, the Cyclopes are peaceful towards other races. At the same time, they're steadfastly attached to their land. They regard the Coming of the Waters variously, depending upon which City of Law they happen to live in. Despite the differences, the interpretations boil down to two essential ideals. The first one implies that the gods are bent on punishing the faithless who dwell in the lowlands, whether they be Cyclops, Human or any other race. The second simplified interpretation brings forth the idea that the gods are trying to draw the world closer to themselves, as was achieved through the Plague of Enlightenment in their own prehistory.

The result of these slightly conflicting ideals is that some of Cyclopes can tolerate other races being on their traditional ground, while other Cyclopes are actively hostile towards them. All of the Cities of Law, however, have heavily fortified their islands against the 'infidel pilgrims', believing that until the gods decree they've suffered enough, the Cyclopes must allow no outsiders to defile the temples. The settlement of non-sacred ground by outsiders is the only issue that all Cyclopes cannot agree upon.

The Tower at Wayreth

...in which the Great City-State of Wayreth is constructed

[This section still under development...]

The Nexi are discovered. It is noted that 27 cities on Jaal have been located on ley line nexi. Yet Wayreth does not. This causes great confusion among the mages and city elders until the discovery of the Prime Nexus at the center of Wayreth. A great tower is built on that spot, with lesser reflections of that tower in various stages of construction in all the remaining 27 cities of the land.

The Learned Guild

...in which the Guild of the Learned Disciplines is discussed

With the construction of the 'Towers of the Void' at 9 of the 28 Cities, and the 'Tower of Connection' at Wayreth, the abilities of Humanity were considered second to none. This was the golden age of development. More scientific and magical research was being done than at any other time in the history of Jaal. The only thing holding back research was the incredible amount of time it took to travel between cities to exchange information. Upon realizing this impediment, men and women of learning and magic decided on a course of action that could further both of their pursuits.

Mages and Scholars came together in a single unifying organization, the Learned Guild. Through this organization they shared information, and amortized the expenses of spreading and retrieving information through a single network of couriers. Research was

combined, duplicate work eliminated, and unheard of advancements occurred through cooperation of the Disciplines.

This cooperation led to their greatest achievement. Through their combined efforts, the Learned realized that the placement of the 28 cities coincided with nexi of the Void. This single discovery alone led to years of fruitful research and theoretical papers on the properties of each of the fortuitous locations, but the work did not stop there.

Through theory after theory and experiment after experiment, the Learned slowly, yet surely, found out how to 'open' Moon Gates into the Veins of Nothing, and even further, how to navigate the channels of the Void to get to other open Moon Gates.

Moon Gates were put into place in each of the Towers. At first, teleportation through the Void required massive amounts of energy and time, and was only used for experimentation. Some of the earliest of the bold experimenters never returned from their trip...and their fate is unknown. Over time, the process was refined. The Learned discovered how to more easily make use of the Void itself to open Moon Gates and steer the voyage, until finally, they learned how to leave the Moon Gates in the Towers permanently—and could direct destination through a simple reconfiguration of magical machinery, the Navigational Runes.
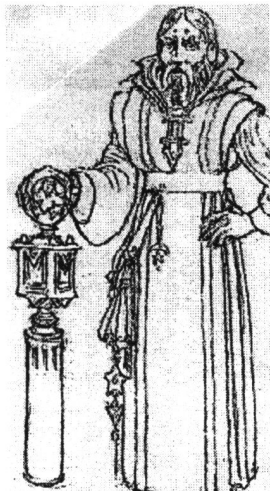
With teleportation now almost a mundane art, the Guild of the Learned knew no more boundaries to research. They achieved power the general public sometimes perceived as nearly godlike in nature. They were looked upon with a great deal of awe and just a little bit of horror. Still, the Learned drew deeper and deeper into their order, shutting off the outside world save for the perfunctory acts of kindness and goodwill they had always performed for the communities. They became a shadowy cult-like organization, shrouded in mystery, though still greatly respected and admired by those on the outside.

Internal politics grew and became the new bottleneck to research within the Guild. Before the Deluge, the Guild was teetering on the brink of self-destruction due to a rivalry between Lokerh, Fifth Scholar Mage of the Disciples of Anid the Righteous, Lord of the Tower at Imlan and his counterpart, Ontaris, Magistrate of the Second High Council of the Guild, Lord of the Tower at Hermesti.

An Evening With Vir The Foul, High Lord of the Tyrog

...in which the Tyrog discover and begin aquaforming Jaal

[This section still under development...]

On the planet of Kolbeth, Vir the Chosen, High Lord of the Tyrog Empire, discovers an open Moon Gate in his random survey of the Void Paths. It has been opened in a way that he is unfamiliar with and he's unable to pass through it. This is unusual for him.

When he first discovered Kolbeth and brought his people there, there were no complications, and the few creatures living there were of such low intelligence that they were easily disposed of.

This open Moon Gate is different and poses an interesting challenge. He's able to send a tendril of intelligence and consciousness into this new world. He encounters Belakon, a powerful mage on a distant world. Through deceit and cunning, Vir finds a means to trick Belakon into believing that his intentions are friendly.

Belakon, a greedy and ambitious mage in his own right, is deceived by the promises of an army of his own to command, giving him a physical power on Jaal to match the mental and magical powers he's already amassed. He shares some of the hard-won knowledge of the Learned Guild with Vir. Before long, Vir has mastered the manipulation of the wonderfully convenient network of towers on this new world. Shortly thereafter, he begins his aquaforming efforts in earnest. His faithful Tyrogs, after all, cannot be expected to arrive at a new world only to find it dry and barren.

The Migration

…in which the Tyrogian flooding of Jaal is complete and the Migration begins

[This section still under development...]

Having succeeded in flooding Jaal almost to the very tops of its mountains and highest points, Vir initiates a migration of the Tyrogs to their new habitat. He delights in the prospect of a comfortable world all their own, with a race of humans at their disposal to teach him the higher arts of magic. Vir has always physically dominated his environment. Now he has the opportunity to do the same with his mind and his will. There are no limits to his greatness.

Taming the Waters

…in which the Peoples of Jaal learn to adapt

[This section still under development...]

Pushed ever inward by the inexplicable aquaforming of the world, the various races of Jaal retreat ever inland, climbing higher up the mountains until soon only a few parcels of dry land remain. These islands are heavily defended by the races who ended up there, so Humanity—by far the most populace race on Jaal—begins a new initiative.

Using the wealth of knowledge they've accumulated over the millennia, Humanity perfects the art of building floating cities. Later still, they build beneath the waters themselves—the underwater city of Imlan, and their finest achievement, the great underwater capital of Wayreth.