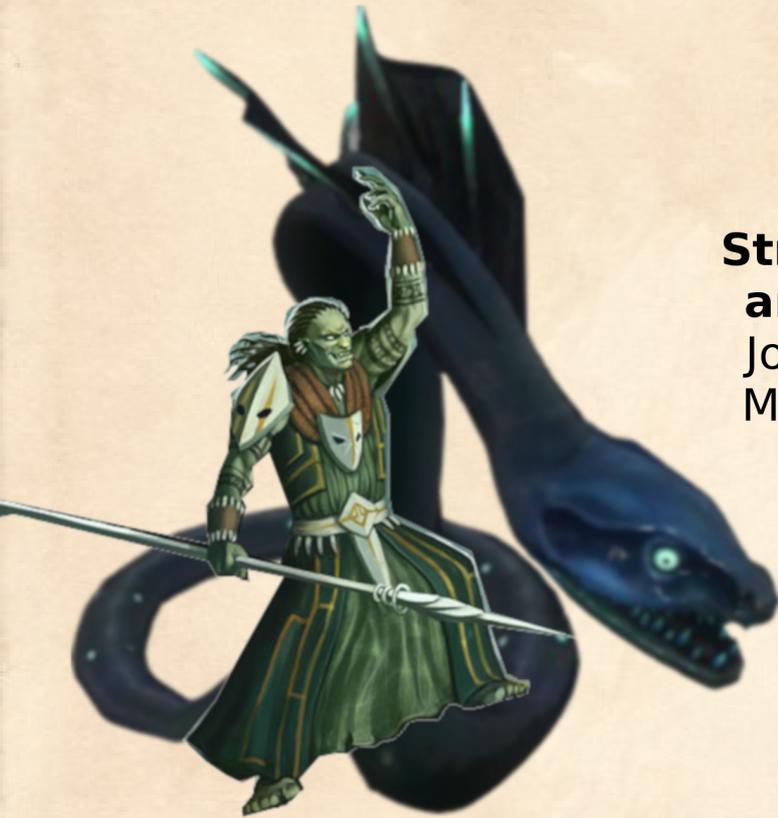


The Stronghelm Globe

News from the Commonwealth and beyond
Since 229 YC



**Stronger AI
and more:**
Jolly Jokers
Mod Bundle



AI Booster
The unit gets +100% Bonus on all XP gained.
(AI XP-Booster)

Interview:
With Marcuspers

**Read about the recent
clash between:**
Sverina the Golden
and
Krinla Peas



Missing: Pony
Rider Gordon

Also in this issue:
Tournament Standings
Announcements
The Horoscope:
News about Planetfall

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Letter to the Readers

- I** EAR well informed dweller of Athla, before you lies the third volume of **The Stronghelm Globe**. We hope that this issue again will
- II** extend your knowledge about Athla and
- III** our Age.
- VIII** Our Lore chapter has unfortunately been lost by the Stronghelm Postal Pony Service so you'll have to deal without the intellectual debate about our world in this issue.
- X**
- XV** This issues diary is written by Krinla Peas, a Halfling Archdruid eager to explain about environmental issues, clashing with Sverina the Golden, a human sorcerer and vivid reader of this newspaper. She wrote an open letter to Prof. Dr. Shlumpf, trying to rectify some of his views about humans, in this issue. Both can be found starting from page **III**.
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Reading from page **VIII** onwards you will hear from marcuspers. If you don't know this veteran of countless battles in our time, head right over to read about him. The workshop section starting on page **X** features a whole mod bundle just recently released to the public on nexusmods. It is made by Jolly Joker and he explains what he did and how he hopes to have created a more challenging game experience especially when it comes to the AI.

The Horoscope text (starting on page **XV**) has BloodyBattleBrain again look upon the stars that might be conquered in the far future musing about mechanics and lore.

Finally again we end with the standings of all currently running tournaments and the announcement section (page **XXI**). We hope everything you find here can keep you occupied until our next issue arrives.

Happy reading!

The Stronghelm Globe

No lore today

Dear reader and history buff. You may have noticed that our current issue is delayed a bit. Unfortunately the Stronghelm Postal Ponies Service (SPPS) has yet another scandal at their hands, as one of their pony riders (Gordon) has been severely delayed. We hope nothing happened to him, but wonder when the post will finally will replace their old and out of date pony line and change to Zephyrs.

Unfortunately our correspondence with Prof. Dr. Shlumpf and Prof. von Dhraco has been with the missing pony rider. Both are currently out of Stronghelm and we relied on the post for their correspondence. Without their letters we unfortunately are unable to provide you the lore chapter in this issue. We hope to continue this canonical section in the next issue!

If you have insider information on the SPPS, the whereabouts of Gordon or anything else that should be known across Athla - Don't hesitate to write us:

The Stronghelm Globe
Inkling alley 13 $\frac{22}{7}$
Stronghelm (Commonwealth)



Missing: Pony Rider Gordon

War Diaries



IN this issue of the war diary we publish 2 sides of a 4 sided struggle from correspondence sent to us with the request for publication. The texts are printed as is and want to stress that the views printed hereafter do not necessarily express the views of **The Stronghelm Globe!**

The game is between BloodyBattleBrain (BBB) and Fluks on a medium size continents map with seals (40 charges to win). Apart from BBB and Fluks there are 2 random AIs on emperor difficulty. There are no teams at the beginning, but team victory is on. The underground has been disabled, cosmic events and empire quests enabled. Heroes match players race. The game is played without mods. Gentlemens agreements are: Manual fights only between main players, no split stacking and no attacks in the beginning of a turn.

The Story of Krinla Peas

Heidideliho dear Readers,
let me introduce myself: I am Krinla Peas, from the Peas family in the new continent. We are farmers near the town of Maghratela with nothing but peas in mind and my family is proud to say that our peas are found in every halfling storage worthy its name.

Nothing extraordinarily improbable happened in my childhood, until this one day: Me and my brother Brandlo where out in the fields watering the peas. All of a sudden a sperm whale fell out of the sky onto my dear brother.



That is me: Krinla Peas

I was lucky, a bowl of petunias crashed just next to me and I could **FEEL** the words: *Oh No! Not again.*

Clearly that was not the natural order of things! Halflings shouldn't die from whales falling on them. Something is out of balance and despite the shock I remembered the words *Not again* and to prevent such unnatural occurrences from happening again I became an environmental activist advocating a life with peas and balance with nature. This has brought me here on this sparsely settled beautiful land and I will see if I can find the reason for natures unrest. There are unsettling powers here, I can feel it.

The first week:

We arrived in our headquarters, Amstamla, in the east of this region on a nice patch of grassland with a goldmine and a mananode in the immediate vicinity. From here we will bring peas to the whole region.

Open Letter to Prof. Dr. Shlupmf

By Sverina the Golden

To: Prof. Dr. Shlumpf
c/o University of Stronghelm
Department of Mythomechanical Systems and stupidly large explosions.
From: Sverina the Golden, Sorcerer extraordinaire, drainer of swamps and purger of the unnatural, and bane of fake news.

Dear sir,
I recently read your article "On Humans and their Empires," and desired to relate my own, recent expedition, in the hope that it persuades you that, contrary to your article, not all Humans are expansionist megalomaniacs and some, such as yours truly, have had their hands forced by others. What you label as greed is often self-defence. I pray you read my expedition logs, enclosed, before others denounce me in the name of Malchar, Fai Dural and, worst of all, the infamous peas tyrant Krinla, first (and with any luck, last) of her name. I am sure you will find it an illuminating read.

Where to begin?
Day 1- 5, expeditionary force.



I have been sent here, on a scouting expedition, in light of recent troubling events regarding what some of us

We are greeted by Pimton, bane of the Undead, a local theocrat hero and immediately find common ground as we both fight the unnatural. Our first action is building a builders hall in Amstamla and start our research on how to tame local wild animals. Then we begin mapping the immediate surrounding and making the nearby mines and mana nodes arable.

Just as we made sure the inhabitants of a necromantic circle finally return to their natural, dead, state we heard a cold whisper across the land. Could Pimton be right in the end about the Undead being the greatest danger in this land?

On day 4 one of our Pony Riders met Halfling sisters! They live in our south in the beautiful Town of Ingewal. Of course they want Peas and so we start of with very good neighbourly relations.

Their city guard however seems not to be the brightest pea in the pot as it keeps blocking the bridge leading to their town. Therefore, on day 6, we decided to direct our brightest minds towards the construction of ships to ensure we are able to visit our brothers and sister of Ingewal. We did well with this precaution as on day 7 we received a plea for help from Ingewal; their goldmine is infested by spiders. As soon as we reach the bridge the mentally challenged city guard is still firmly blocking the bridge, but is now also shouting at us: "Hurry up Idiot! We are overrun by spiders"...



A clearly overstressed city guard...

The second week

The intermezzo with the city guard came finally to a conclusion as we boarded our ships and freed Ingewal from their spider plague on day 12. As token of mercy an Eagle rider joined us and Ingewal and me formed an alliance with the goal of unification in the not too distant future.

Due to the Ingewal affair I forgot to keep you updated on other important events. Another Hero, Rikky the Kidnapper has joined our cause and the first brave Pioneers have settled on the northern shore of our landmass and named the outpost Wankuwela. As economic Patron I'll make sure that their storehouse will always be filled. Furthermore, the eagle rider from Ingewal

believed, and still believe, to be mere fairy tales. I speak of course of the alleged seals of power. I have been auspiciously granted a licence to survey the area, find the seals, if they exist and report on the disposition of the locals. Any magical affairs are best conducted by one versed in the ways of the ether, namely myself, latest in a long line of illustrious sorcerers who can trace their ancestry back to Merlin the great. Any who tell you he did not have offspring are pedalling FAKE NEWS.

I have established a base, and note a distinct lack of mana nodes anywhere in the vicinity. This is not good. My assistant is none other than Cerrin Treefolk, a capable lady.

I did, however, discover a nearby Human city. The inhabitants declined my peaceful propositions, and endeavoured to kidnap my loyal assistant. For fear of further unpleasantness, I have built a wall. I then ~~conquered~~ gently absorbed the city, and ~~made~~ convinced them to pay for the wall. As I believed, the guilty parties were mere thugs tyrannising an otherwise peaceful conurbation, whose inhabitants now follow me.

Just as things were settling down, we received rumours of spectres and other worldly being coming into existence. As I am the only sorcerer here with an actual licence, this is ~~disturbing~~ noteworthy indeed. I summoned wisps and sent them in various directions, to find out what is happening. The news could not have been more dire. There is a Necromancer, on my doorstep. What's worse, he is a Human. Malchar the Unholy, wanted in many places. This is ~~worrying~~ intriguing.

Day 6 (redacted)

Day 7 – I am joined by my first Apprentice. I know that at this stage, the minions of the Undead have but a foothold, and lack true power, but they cannot and must not, be allowed to grow.



Day 8 – news of my goldenness spreads, and I am joined by a dreadnought. Although not a traditional pairing, I feel this person, who I am naming Assistant 1 in order to protect their innocence (and not because I forgot their name, FAKE NEWS!) could be very useful indeed. I decide that my best bet is to rely on my

discovered 2 strange spots in the west that are heavily guarded by elementals. Rikky tells me they are Seals of Power, strange unnatural structures and everyone daring to come to inspect them is viciously attacked by otherworldly creatures.



Could these Seals be what I am looking for?

Those structures seem interesting indeed. But before we can think of expeditions there we have more mundane tasks at hand. A bunch of scoundrels are roaming our fields, and when we explored their camp we discovered that they held a little draconian hatchling in a cage, clearly not an adequate environment for such a young and intelligent being. He travels with us now.

The third week

Already on day 13 a dwarf comet appeared in the sky. And with this encouraging star sign two of Amstamlas inhabitants decide to take the opportunity to become hunters after we found construction resources for an archery range in Amstamla.

Our Eagle rider spots a Fairy dwelling across the sea in our north and my assumptions are confirmed once again, there is something rotten in these lands. First the spider plague and now Ogres trampling around on the fairies turf. The natural dwellers of this lands all seem to be in distress. At least these news convinced Ingewal to join us on day 18 and we immediately started to train a city guard that is better suited for the tasks at hand.

Considering the new frontiers that our peaceful empire now faces, Pimton, Rikky and me decided to split up. Pimton and Rikky are northbound to cross the seas and help the fairies, while I am headed south to see what lies beyond the borders of Ingewal.

On other notes, I recognized that we urgently must invest in more research facilities as we will be in dire need of them if we ever are to unveil the seals secrets, so I ordered to build another laboratory in Wankuwela and we will see what else can be done to accelerate our progress in that regard.

The fourth week

On day 22 Kipper the tireless, a Halfling Warlord hero, stopped by in Amstamla and we could convince him to

Apprentices, and endeavour to send all patrols with at least 2. Speaking of which, my mana income is now neutral.

Day 9 – from out of sight comes rumours of movement to the south. I do not like this.

Day 10 – News comes, that my second city has fallen (to Lost Souls) at the same time that I receive an envoy from a scaly Draconian, preaching a strange creed. Naturally, I at first feared an invasion, but reconnaissance informs me that these poor spirits are in fact wild, feral, under no-one's control. I decide that they, and all who tamper and deal with them, must be ~~purged~~ freed from this unmortal coil. I do wonder about the lizard, and decide that she must be ~~monitored~~ made to see that ~~opposing me is futile~~ friendship is magic

Day 11 – The ~~purging~~ liberation begins well, as I recapture the city.

Day 12 – My exploring, peaceful, sprightly, lovely, intriguing and amazing wisps have been viciously set upon and murdered. I shall cherish the memory of their soft wings softly lulling me to sleep with their gentle susurrus. On the plus side, my mana income is now positive. I am worried however that our progress appears to be stalling.



Day 13 - We observe a Dwarf comet in the sky, and it inspires us to work harder, inbetween wonderings on how many dwarves it takes to make a comet. It also stiffens my resolve, and I order that my forces. As my wisps keep getting bullied, I start to summon Phantasm warriors.

Day 14 & 15 – redacted.

Day 17 – Glory be, I have found a city of the vile Malchar, and it appears to be only recently oppressed. After consulting the oracle, it is decided that the first city shall remain a seat of eldritch powers, and train Apprentices, but that the second shall be given over to the training of Cavalry, which only makes sense given the presence of a cooling spring of life there.

Day 18 – Glory be, fortune smiles on us. Whilst exploring, we found some construction material which, once liberated, allowed the construction of a Hall of Chivalry. Also, we strike the first blow for freeeeeeeeedom, and liberate Bodewal from the clutches of the

join our cause. He will be joining me in the south soon. In the meanwhile Pimton and Rikky have landed and helped the fairies at Leshann and in return we are now free to walk their lands and two adorable buttercup fairies will accompany us on our further travels.

Between Ingewal and Amstamla an outpost has been installed on Day 23 near a trade post and two gold-mines, where traveller from Ingewal can rest on their way to Amstamla. And to further enhance the well-being within our realm we will now supply each of our settlements that offers a public bath to it's citizens with free extra rations of Peas. Remember only a clean and well-fed halfling is a happy halfling!

On day 24 something important happened! One of our hunters found a lonely draconian flamer west of Leshann. It soon turned out that we are not the only one investigating these lands. The flamer claimed to follow the teachings of Fai Dural Dzirikon, a draconian Theocrat focussing on the magical aspects of earth, destruction and creation. This might be a reason to celebrate as we are very fond of draconians. Our Idol, Reskar Scapeshaper, the founder of the Athla environmental movement, is also draconian! If Fai Dural Dzirikon is anything like him he might be of great help.

To start things off we gave the flamer a message for Fai telling that we offer peas. Fai politely declined. But we are not discouraged so quickly and remember that Rikky told us about the men of god being often much more open to suggestions if the suggestion is accompanied by offerings for their deity, such as mana or gold. So we offered Peas with 100 mana and even Peas, 200 Mana and 50 gold. But he dismissed all offers, just to send a proposal for a "Peace treaty" on day 28. That surely is a strange way to spell "Peas" but we don't discriminate his spelling weakness and obviously accepted the offer.

When we told the fairies of Leshann about our advances towards Reskar and his spelling they also laughed and offered to become our ally in return for some financial support. Of course we gladly accepted.

Probably just lightened up by our new close relations with the fairies and Fai, Pimton was in a very good mood this evening, claiming that he felt as if a great burden has been finally lifted from this land. We were all wondering what he meant by that since surely we have



Fai, he's weird, but is he also a friend?

swamp dweller Malchar. Anyone who says we are the aggressors here has obviously recently come out of a Dreadnought foundry and had a GRENADE of lies blow up on them and are obviously bleeding FAKE NEWS.



Day 19 – My Knights and Sarjeants inform me that as a result of strict training, they now believe they can strip a city bare in half the normal time, which is something to consider, should the day go against us.

Day 20 – Bodewal is completely under our control, and the last remnants of Malchar's taint have been removed.

Day 21 – Scouts reveal to me an ominous city of dread, very close to Bodewal. This much dark energy can only mean we have found Malchar's seat of power. ~~Burn the heretic~~ Offer peace to others. ~~Kill the mutant~~ be accepting of those that are different. ~~Purge the unclean~~ Clean that which needs cleaning. We push forward, fingers are crossed, missives sealed and swords sharpened. We prepare for battle.

Day 22. The battle is long and hard, ~~and we nearly lose, due to some bad planning.~~ And Malchar's hordes play dirty, but we stand firm. Our cause is just, and out victory total...or would be, if only we could find Malchar himself. We anoint one of our squires, now a Knight true and strong.

Near Bodewal, the fleeing remnants of Malchar's army are spotted, and we fear a counter attack into our now undefended heartlands. In great haste, we pursue.

Day 23 – Much like Bodewal, the new city's inhabitants are quick to throw off their chains, and join us in celebration and happiness.

Day 24 – Near Bodewal, we destroy the remnants of the **terrorist** grouping, and ~~interrogation~~ gentle talk reveals to us the location of Malchar himself, someway to the east. Fortuitously, I learn to lessen the bonds that tie us to the earth, and can now soar free, not quite as free as a bird, but I float in bliss.

We advance.

Day 25 – My apprentices inform me that they are close to infusing their attacks with such eldritch power as to stun our opponents. We locate Malchar. He looks weakly defended, but I am paranoid.

done merely a small step towards bringing peas to this lands.

As night fell our Astronomers came with disturbing news. The stars herald the arrival of an avatar of fire in 4 days to come, we must prepare quickly in case this unnatural force will come to our realm to burn our crops.

And while Pimton and Rikky were looking at the fiery omens in the sky we got message from a gryphon that he met Fisskana, a settling of frostlings in the ice covered wasteland and like all other native dwellers of these lands they also have been through hard times lately and ask me to help with an undead scourge in their domain. And so Kipper the tireless and me turn westwards to help Fisskana with the undead scourge. In Amstamla none other than Lardo the builder, a halfling Dreadnought from the commonwealth showed up, a great timing as with Pimton and Rikky in the north and Kipper and me in the south we can use him to make sure our home is not unprotected when the avatar of fire appears.

On the next day our Gryphon makes yet another surprising discovery. An army under the banner of Sverina the Golden comes into sight. We are not sure what this is about to mean, but after the confusion with Fai we are more careful now. Besides she is a sorcerer, and it is well known that they always fiddle with the other world and even summon unnatural beings from there. Attached is a pictures of us just south of Ingewal.



Day 26 – The path to Malchar is mountainous and rough, and we have no Dwarves to guide us. Our journey is slow, and we are in full view of our heinous foe.

Day 27 – It appears there was no trap, no secret army of cadaverous hordes, no Horrors of Bone, and we dispatch Malchar. Victory is sweet, and we sleep very comfortably.

Day 28 – We are rudely awoken. Grim tiding from the east. First, our seers inform us that a Draconian Rogue, no doubt in league with that lizard Fai, will soon manifest herself upon this land. MY land. Don't they know I have a charter?

Secondly, a Gryphon flies right by our camp, perches by our cookfires. We try to catch it, as it is delicious slow stewed with mushrooms and garlic, but it is quite uncanny how it evades us, as if driven by some unnatural intelligence.



The nearly secured dinner (best with mushrooms and garlic) suspiciously evades capture.

It worries me somewhat, so I consult Cerrin Treefolk, who tells me that this avian interloper is indeed under the thrall of a Druid, none other than the infamous (so Cerrin tells me - I personally have no knowledge of tree huggers) Krinla Pea Lover maker of Peas or pease pudding or some such nonsense.

I am somewhat concerned, ~~Haflings are notoriously tricky, and this one has the distinct advantage of knowing where I am, whereas she is still a mystery.~~ What matter? Throw some steak at the Hafling and be done with it. I worry not.

Dear reader, as the texts are quite lengthy we make a break here and will continue in the next issue of **The Stronghelm Globe**.

You have reports of war crimes or heroic deeds? send them to:

The Stronghelm Globe

Inkling alley 13²²/₇

Stronghelm (Commonwealth)

We offer first class anonymity.

Don't be afraid, expose today!

Famous Generals: Marcuspers

Stronghelm Globe (**SG**): Hi Marcuspers. First would you like to tell where you are from and what you do beside playing AoW3?

Marcuspers Marcus (M) - Hello! My name is Marcus but it seems like most people fail to see that and still call me marcuspers :) I'm originally from Sweden but now live in Germany with my wife and son. On my spare time, when I don't play Age of Wonders, I have a large interest for playing cards, and have played Bridge competitively.

SG: How do you play? Do you listen to a playlist while playing or the in-game background music? Observer mode on or off? Forced high speed tactical combat? Animated movement on the map?

M: I love the theme music, there is something magical about it, it can however be a bit repetitive after a while, but I don't play any other music, no.

In the beginning I played all the combat animations, but I think I got a bit restless and now force battle without any introduction, units on fastest speed and of course observe mode off. I remember the first time I played a live game and my screen jumped from south to east, north to west etc!! Never again.

SG: When did you start playing Age of Wonders? Did you play previous installations before AoW3?

M: Age of wonders III is sadly my first installment of the series. I say sadly because I feel like I missed out 10-15y ago when the first was released.

I started with watching DasTactics „let's play“ videos, and thought wow, I must try this! And fair to say this is one of the best games, and deepest in terms of replayability, I've come across.

After a few, let's say, not so successful random PBEM games I came across Evgendil from the Russian community, we played many, many games together and eventually we became good friends. He also introduced me to Jean and we together formed our team The King Serpents.

SG: You are probably best known by PBEM players, but you also are a strong Live MP player and were one of the few that actively played the Arena mode for a while. What is your favourite way to play?

M: First of all, I wouldn't say strong live player! But I do like a few live games every now and then, what I like most with live games is obviously the grand end game battles, where you face another human who will really test your combat skills. The obvious negative aspect is, unless you do a duel, it takes a lot of time.

I invested quite a bit of time and effort in testing and balancing the arena, and in the very beginning we made a „live event“ where AbedNego and NemesisZero (2 of the very best LMP) fought each other and I commented there moves for the audience.

I wish the arena would have become more popular as it is a great way for pbem players who lack a lot of time can try the end game battles vs another human.

That there is „3“ different modes just shows how great the game is, I won't pick one way as my favorite!

SG: What do you think is the strongest race/class/spec combination and why?

M: Hmm, on a medium or large map, strongest must be humans or tigrans, with their settler bonus. I would combine that with a shadowborn Warlord for the lifestealing class units.

On a smaller map I like summoning classes such as Sorcerer or AD, who can build armies on the run.

I think it's more rewarding/easier to go for the pure evil alignment, as it's usually quicker to migrate a city (especially as Necro) or to hasty plunder it.

SG: Which race/class/spec are your favourites and for what reason?

M: It's known that I have a love for AD and it's still my favorite, even if I play Druid less and less. I like to combine Humans with AD due to the strong racial t3 which complement the Shamans good. As for specialization, I think Greyguard Master for extra cp, gold and population goes well when an empire building AD. For a smaller map, probably better to focus on a quick Hunter build and get destruction adept at least to



Marcus is one of the veterans in the Age of Wonders Multiplayer community. Best known for his PBEM prowess (Rank #4 in the battlefield ranking) he is also actively playing Live and Arena matches as well as being involved in testing mods (PBEM balance Mod, the shadow realms mod and the Arena Mod) and uploading videos on [youtube](#).

Disclaimer: He is not Markus "Notch" Persson who helped finance AoW3.

cripple the enemy's empire (Hasty Plunder).

SG: In the PBEM 2017 Duel tournament out of 32 players only Hiliadan, gabthegab and Jean_de_Metz came further than you. Who do you guess will win?

M: Thanks for highlighting that! It was a tough match vs Hiliadan, who played exceptionally well. I think Gab will win vs Hiliadan, and then get revenge on Jean. Reading the report, Jean managed to frustrate Gab to the point where Gab made a crucial mistake and Jean capitalized. I think Gab will learn from that and be more careful, now when he knows he met his match. The final can however go either way, Jean is an incredible strategist and seems to always have a plan!

SG: You'll be participating in the 2v2 PBEM team tournament together with Dreadreapr, what are your expectations?

M: I expect us to have fun and surprise everyone by winning the whole tournament ;)

SG: What was your favourite AoW3 match and why?

M: Tough one to answer! The current top 8 game must be up there, with such a high level of competitors and very few openings to exploit. My tournament rematch vs Hellbrick where he took all my cities and I was surviving by selling items before plundering his cities is also a good contender. Was so much back and forth and I had a "too good" start, meaning I over stretched and summoned too many dragons to be able to maintain it.

SG: What do you think was the most annoying mistake/blunder you made in a game so far?

M: That's easier! In the match vs Hiliadan I lost my leader in a Ancient Ruin when I was about 3 turns from his base after defeating his leader stack. Without that mistake my leader could obviously cast more spells, heal my army and not lose mana/happiness. Probably cost me the game.

SG: Is there any aspect of the game that you are particularly strong at (tactical combat, economy, strategic movement, clearing sites etc.)?

M: I'm relatively good at clearing sites (goes hand in hand with tactical combats) and leveling up my troops. I'm also quite good at planning the research, to maximize the impact and not waste any research by overflow.

SG: What do you think is your biggest weakness?

M: Where I can improve most is probably in the scouting. Looking at some of the best, Hiliadan, Gab and Jean, they are all superior to me in that regard. So it's not strange they are the last 3 left in the current tournament.

SG: What is the biggest mistake new players tend to make in your opinion?

M: Not sure I would call it a mistake, but I remember when I was new to the game, what I didn't do enough was to take risks, i.e. attacking site which seems too hard at first. Splitting the defenders, sometimes retreating with some units to force the enemy to come all the way back while you can regroup, heal etc. On that topic, I guess exploiting the AI weakness and farm xp is also something new players have a hard time adopting to. Another tip is to study the hero lvls and what abilities become available and then save some upgrade points to better be fit for high level sites.

SG: You have been around in the AoW Multiplayer community for quite some time. Has it changed over the years?

M: It have become much smaller that's for sure! But I also think that the gap between new and experienced players are much smaller, maybe it's because of the videos/guides that are available, which make new players better understand a "better way to play" or at least a more efficient way.

SG: What are your thoughts on Planetfall?

M: Seems very promising! I have read the developer journals and it seems like a much bigger game, at least in terms of territory. And I think that's one of the reasons they have decided to help the players from micromanagement by adding garrisons and auto building roads between sections. I'm not a big fan of the focus in long range units and possibility of missing attacks, same as I don't particular like the haffings luck mechanic, too much of a dice roll in my opinion.

SG: Anything you want to say that wasn't covered by the questions already?

M: Not really, I think you covered it all! I would however like to say thank you for letting me participate and I want to say thank you for doing this fantastic work.

Thank you for the flowers (and the interview)!

Workshop

The Workshop - Where new things are created and old favourites improved. This month we have an introductory text from Jolly Joker about his [Mod bundle](#) .

Modding the game for balance, fun - and improving the AI

By Jolly Joker

S have been playing computer games for over 30 years, but modding was never high on my to-do list. Too many games to play, and somehow it feels like cheating, if you know what I mean. I made a small mod for HoMM 3, and that's it. Until AoW 3 came along, that is. I've been playing the game to death since its release, but when the Eternal Lords expansion came out, things seemed a bit out of whack, and the devs countered complaints with pointing to the more casual players and their game experience.

But little did I know about things being out of whack. I started to play PBEM, and there were 2 kinds of players: Those who played like me - which I would beat - and those who fulfilled Paragon Empire Quest on turn 5, or so it seemed to me - which I would lose to. Needless to say that I was a bit perplexed.

When the official fix of reducing what was called "XP contacts" of units didn't solve the problem, I decided to put time into understanding what exactly the problem was and how to mod the game in order to reduce what I thought was seriously hurting the game: The importance and the possibility of levelling up heroes fast, snowballing yourself to fun-free victory, but of course, once I got the hang of it there was no stopping.

Anyway, I won't go into technical detail for the balance stuff. I think, I fixed XP exploit for Heroes and Leaders, mostly. The core of the game is still there, and a player who puts some effort into battles to maximize XP gain can - and actually should - still do it, although it's less tedious to do so, because you can't do it ad nauseum anymore. Heroes will level up WAY slower. It depends on the settings, of course, but things proceed differently, and it's more rewarding now to filter XP to your units because they medal up quite fine. It looks like you'd need insane amounts of XP now, but I also changed the base values to have more room for adjustments. In addition I changed a plethora of things that struck me as imbalanced? Small stuff, like Charge AND Pounce on Tigran Manticore Riders? Really? Inflict Stun on Elven Manticore Riders? Really? (The last one might be an error anyway, meaning Inflict Shocking.)

But also bigger stuff with Necro imbalances and this and that. However, I didn't want to spoil the fun in the game, so the cool stuff is still there - I just made it more difficult to get (early). Since the possibility to do that is there, the game will now make, in some cases, a difference between your LEADER and the HIRED HEROES (that may or may not be of your Leader's Class). Generally spoken, Heroes will get the really cool stuff to pick later than if they were a Leader.

You will also note a different system of what the casting point abilities for heroes cost and do, and a lot more. I modded all tooltips and descriptions, and I urge you to check everything - there might be changes, where you don't expect them.

There is more obvious stuff, like Dreads and Warlords having a triple shot ability as well, although with low range, and Dread Heroes being able to become the terror of the seas now, as you can see in Figure 1 on the right. Letter of Marque's description is shown, and you see Fleet Admiral and Improved Ship Ordnance as a new ability as well. Harbors giving



Fig. 1: A Dreadnought hero can now become the undisputed ruler of the seas.

+1 Gold and +1 Pop for each water hex (the effect of which you can see in the figure as well) and being able to repair ships (for a higher building cost), and so on and so forth. Also, I wasn't quite satisfied with the Archon Revenant Dwelling cost and structure, which is different now.

When I started to mod units I rarely or even never used, while technically still "balance", fun started to seep in. I really like the Halflings and the Luck mechanism, but I also think that Halflings are a bit light - and could have more funny, sorry, Halfling-like abilities. As a result I modded Halflings quite extensively, changing Farmer's and Nightwatch's position (like Tigrans), so that you can recruit Farmers with Barracks, and reduced the cost for Barracks and War Hall. Farmers have now the Scary Scarecrow Imitation ability you see on the screenshot (figure 2) plus Homemade Weapons, reducing upkeep to 3, for an additional +5 Gold production cost. In addition Nightwatches gain something called Befuddling Swordplay Antics. Lastly RG 3 will give Brew Brothers an ability called Drunken Cleaver Master and Pony Riders Trick Riding plus +4 Movement speed. I will leave it to you to find out what they do. There is more stuff, like Impalers getting the rather descriptive ability Impaling, Orc Razors getting Point Blank Dead Shot, Goblin Marauders going up to 32 MP and a lot more. Again, my advice is, check units, check medals, check tooltips, and don't forget RG descriptions either. Moreover I decided to let Arcane Libraries hand out ANY T1 or T2 technology; after all, why would you find only tech of your class on the whole map? Sure, this adds a COMPLETELY random technology element, but that makes exploring them also a lot more thrilling. What goodie will you get? Getting War Effort as a Sorcerer is pretty cool, obviously, just as an example. You don't have to play that mod, of course - but that would mean you couldn't play the changes I implemented for Arch Druid which include evolves for all T1 AD animals (but of course every one else profits as well, when befriending an animal with a hired AD or getting one, after exploring a Great Farm). Yeah, I know, anathema; IMBA, for god's sake - but a lot of fun, actually. Sure, I also nerfed spider HPs - but who cares, when you take a look at figure 2, showing a Champion 7 Vampire Spider Queen. Aside of the impressive 155 HPs you'll notice the ability Unconditional Love, description being shown as well, a result of a new AD T5 Tech, representing the top of the lot.

Which brings me to the third part of this article, because you may not have guessed it, but this is actually the unit of an AI Arch Druid. It's turn 93 (you'll see later the map settings), and figure 3 on the next page shows her as well as the reason for having this kind of scary shit: AI Booster is an ability every AI unit has, that doubles all XP gains (percentage obviously adjustable). Keep in mind, we operate under severe hero level gain limitations. Sanhild is Level 17, which is better than my best hero, who is Level 15 (my leader, the Terror of the Sea, (although I have a couple of equally strong ones). Ok, AD might have become a bit too good along the line, but the Class certainly clicks now.

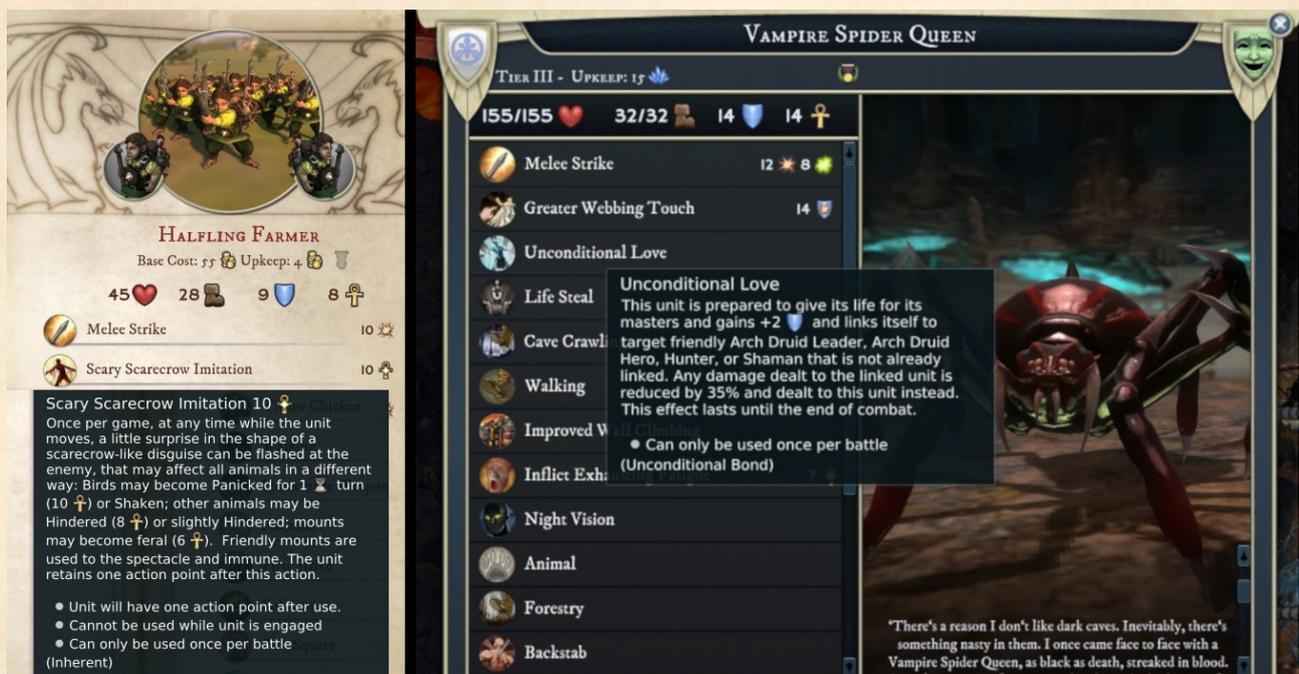


Fig. 2: Halfling farmers can now convincingly imitate scarecrows (left). The Arch Druid class has seen some major rework focussing on the animal/monster aspect - leading to new abilities for their beloved pets. An example is the Vampire Spider Queen with the new ability Unconditional Love on the right.

So when we ask the question, how to improve the AI, the first answer is: we make sure its units can compete with ours, and since autocombat isn't wasting any effort on "optimizing XP gain", the logical consequence is to boost AI XP gain.

Another cheat, yes, but one that makes a lot of sense (even as a regular game feature, as part of the difficulty settings).

What about the battlefield AI? I didn't touch it. Sure you can change this or that, but as long as the AI behavior is halfway coherent, it's not a matter of what the AI does, but more a matter of the human player knowing how the AI will act and react accordingly. Changing the behavior,

then, wouldn't change much, once the human players would have "relearned" AI behaviour, and the bigger shortcomings involving battles with many stacks are not moddable. The problem isn't what the AI DOES on the battlefield, the problem is what it HAS on the battlefield. To make the AI better, you have to improve what you will face, and boosting XP gain is a good start to make sure the AI can compete with you, unit for unit and hero for hero.

What else? Well, you probably know already from experience, that the game is all the tighter, the more crammed the map is. M/UG with 8 players is a slugfest. L and XL ... not so. But, hey, larger maps are fun, right? Develop things, get an empire feeling, have a couple of good triplets of stacks ... You need to get the arc right, so that you are not basically finished with everything you can do except banging out the big guns, while technically still in midgame. What you CAN do, is doing the AI a big favor and play without settling! Since this is probably too much to ask (think fun; I love settling), I tried to address the problems that come with settling, which are immense.

1) Minimum distance between settlements. That's a biggie. Initially this was 5 hexes for everyone. However, the AI used to cram an Outpost in every nook and cranny - and in the way of human players -, annoying even the most benevolent of human player to the point of "AI esse delendam" vows. As a result, minimum distance for AI players was increased to 11 Hexes and an AI cannot settle when it has 4 towns more than the best human player (on Emperor difficulty). The AI doesn't use Builders either.

Of course, that's a SEVERE disadvantage for the AIs - or put, differently, a massive advantage for human players, and the reason why city spamming is so effective (you can do it in a small area, that is easier to defend, and you have more options to find good settling places).

Increasing minimum distance for humans to 11 hexes as well levels the playfield and makes human settler spam tactics pretty pointless (you'll have to cover much more ground, because towns have to be a lot farther apart from each other); it also makes Fortresses pretty pointless as well, leveling the playfield even more.

2) The AI needs a certain number of units for each town it controls, before it can found a new one. Now, you might think, that fast expansion has to be good for the AI, right? Wrong! There are a couple of things to consider here. For one, 11 hexes distance between settlements is a lot, which you will see yourself, when you play these mods. Empires cover a lot of ground, with long borders and lots of weaknesses. So what happens when humans (with 5 hex minimum distance) settler-spam in a compact area? The AI can settle as well, just over a much larger area.

Now, humans build settlements in order to expand their economy. More research, more gold, more mana, more production sites. The AI, though ... not so much. You know, it cheats. Economically. The AI doesn't NEED towns the way human players need them. The vanilla setting for the number of units the AI needs per town it



Fig. 3: Sanhild the High Queen, a boosted AI leader.

has in order to found a new settlement, is 4, which is, come to think of it, not much.

There is another interesting information I gathered by simply checking what the AI does, especially in the first dozen turns or so. When the AI builds a settler, it escorts the settler and it guards the new town (usually with the escorts). Escort service trumps exploring, though, so settlers may disrupt all plans an AI player might have had before a settler was produced. As an example, a good stack may be enroute to a beefy location to explore, then a settler is produced, and the stack rechecks priorities and breaks up, part of it to escort, part of it to have no valid target anymore, because it's too weak. Not good. So with 4 units per town, exploring may go fully down the forgotten priorities drain, since a sizable part of them will be on escort and town defense duty.

This is the reason why you can tear so easily through AI territory: You settle; the AI can (and does) follow up - disrupting their whole game - and overstretches. The faster you settle, the weaker, sorry, the more BLOWN UP the AI empires become. They are too big and too empty.

The solution here was easy. Production is no problem for the AI, so after some experimenting I ended up with doubling the minimum number of units necessary per town to 8. This simply leads to doubling unit density in AI territory - without any negative consequences for the AI. THEY just take their time, and with your minimum distance increased as well, YOU need to expand a lot bigger making you more vulnerable and the AI a lot less so.

I did a lot more for the AI. A bit better cheating against neutrals; there won't be any surrendering by neutrals either (good players, beware) - not much, at least, since you a 10:1 advantage; a braver calculation of success chances in fights; a couple of details about the priorities of spells and techs and how many spells should be active at the same time; a slight decrease in the worth of mana when figuring the worth of a unit. Slightly reducing unit values, so that sites are a tad better defended. Err, Increasing the maximum percentage of the AI army that can be covered by one unit to slightly more than a quarter... and so on.

So how does it PLAY then, you ask. Well, you saw Sanhild. Figure 4 on the right shows the situation in turn 93. Yellow is me. Black is the Drac Sorcerer, who declared war on me on turn 62, immediately after beating the Human Rogue about the time I - Halfing Dread - beat the Orc Dread (which was a big advantage, being able to use her Class buildings). Builds Drac Apprentices and Flyers a lot, while summoning the hard stuff. Builds also Human Knights a lot. Drac Flyer-backed Apprentices with Stun effect Fire Bomb are somewhat annoying, especially when you also have Orcs employed. Also, the Lightning crap isn't good for machines either. I managed to take a couple of towns off of her, after slowly decimating one or another dozens of her units, playing with a lot of necessary patience. White is Sanhild, the Frostling AD, at war with both the orange Goblin Theo and the lilac Elven Necro (having taken towns from both). The Dwarven



Fig. 4: Surface and Underground in turn 93

Warlord in the lower left UG corner is sadly a non-starter due to his impression of being blocked ... :P (A pity; actually. A Dwarven WL would have made the game a lot more interesting, still.)

I'm playing with the additional Unity VC, which is pretty good for the AI, since it doesn't need the AI to adjust their play in any way. Seals VC WAS a favorite of mine, but the AI is weakened, due to the additional priorities that can paralyze it with indecisiveness, and human players can easily manipulate the other AIs with Seals. In addition, the AI attacks the seals too late and handles them poorly. Pity, actually, because I like the Seals as such; nice targets, nice rewards, nice spawning mechanic - sadly, not good for the AI.

Anyway, 3 beacons is a nice VC. The interesting thing with Beacons is - you cannot conquer them! They disappear when you conquer a town with a beacon, so 3 beacons mean, you must get 3 different races to RG 3 AND to 200 base Race Happiness (to light them) in order to win. In this game, White, Black, Orange and Yellow have built and lit one each, Black and Yellow currently building the second one (for Humans and Orcs, respectively). Black, however, will not continue her journey for much longer: The next Screenshot (figure 5) is from turn 96 and shows the result of the battle that sent her to the Void (she is level 16, and I lost the Juggernaut and the 2 Fire Wyvern in that battle).



Fig. 5: The witch must burn.

It will take me a while to get what will be Dwarves to RG 3, and sadly Orcs are not at 200 Race Happiness, yet, so I cannot lit the second beacon, yet. Before that there will be a clash with Sanhild, and one of the massive kind, and I expect it to start within the next couple turns.

What about game settings, then? I think, they are important. I usually play the settings I used for the map the screens are from, and I can recommend them: L/UG, 8 Players, Emperor diff, Village, Weak starting units, Distance Far, Roads Few, Cities few, rest average, Geography, all at 50%, except water and diggable walls at 25% (halfway to the left), Unifier victory with 3 beacons, Game Speed VERY SLOW, Staring Resources Low, Starting skills Few, No Hero Resurgence, Strong Defenders, Medium Cosmic Happenings, 4 Heroes, Level 30, City Founding ON and Map Exploration On. Classical turns. I also make sure, each Class is on the map, 8 different races, and at least 2 UG starters.

Lastly, I'm not at all finished with modding the game. I've two bigger projects planned: 1) Introduce Racial Hero Upgrades. I've laid the groundwork for that, I just need a plan for all the 9 races (that is, valid Hero upgrades) and this would need complete modding in one go. 2) Restructuring of Race Governance. I'd like more direct comparisons and would like to have Level 1, 3 and 5 as decision between two different military bonuses and level 2 and 4 between two different economic bonusses. (For several advantages, imo.) Needs a complete plan and complete modding in one go as well.

Anyway. Have fun with the mods. You find them at [nexusmods](#)

Try them as a bundle and without other mods to avoid conflict (or give them priority). If you have feedback, don't hesitate to contact me on Discord or Paradox forums' conversation.

I'm the Jolly Joker.

Horoscope

BloodyBattleBrains musings about the future

Greetings, in the last article, I mentioned I'd discuss Hyperion, and known mechanics of Planetfall. So, let's dive right in: Hyperion. If you haven't read it, go and do so. It's an interesting take on sci-fi and holds up remarkably well considering its age. There is mention of something like the internet, before it became a thing. Sadly/happily, Dan Simmons couldn't have predicted the rise of the twitterati, although he did predict a future where people were trapped in a virtual world, so enthralled they forget to eat etc! Anyway, [click here](#) for an enjoyable review and discussion about the books.



The sea of grass on Hyperion.

There is a lot of potential in Planetfall for certain, almost universal, themes to be explored. That said, one must remember that this is a game, first and foremost, so err on the side of subtlety methinks. There are many aspects worthy of discussion, but for the time being, I just want to touch upon:

Altering the Human body:

We know that there are Cyborgs in Planetfall, in fact one of the confirmed NPC factions (equivalent to AoW3 dwellings, or minor races in other games) is the Paragon, who are Vanguard (or more precisely, the empire the Vanguard comes from) but altered with machines. That provides a perfect foil to explore the issues of what makes a human human, and where does one draw the line?

If I replace my heart with some machine, am I still a Human? At what point do we consider me non-human? What if only my heart is Human, and the rest mechanical? What if I start as a human, and end up Machine? What if the changes occur through gene editing (we know there is a xeno/genetic site and secret tech in the game) instead? What if we skip normal conception and just put a heart in a machine? Still human? Imho, this is a fascinating thing to explore. Not exactly new, but remember this guy on the right? →



He learns to cry in the end, ergo human?

Moving onto Planetfall itself, I thought it'd be good/useful, to talk a bit more about the mechanics that we know off, and more specifically, what's new, and why it's of interest to me.

If you haven't read the developer diaries, then you ought to do that now. [Click here](#).

So, in no particular order, here's an attempt to condense what is known. It's not exhaustive. Forgive references to aow3, but they are largely unavoidable, until we know a great deal more about the coming game:

Mechanic: Sectors



Note the asymmetric borders compared to AoW3s city domains.

What we know:

Resource nodes, e.g. mines and mana in AoW3, are now in sectors. What we know as MCUs in AoW3 are now in sectors (e.g. the dungeon, or the temple of the sphinx.) To control them, you must control the sector. To control the sector, you build a forward base (this mechanic could be very different depending on race.) AND you connect it to a city. Think of Company of Heroes to understand how sectors connect ([Dev diary](#) on that matter).

Why it matters:

It could, potentially, stop infinite city spam (aka ICS) because not every sector can host a city. I get the impression actually not very many sectors will be able to host a city. Of course there is a potential problem here in that player 1 has 4 cities and player 2 has 3 cities, and that is a huge gap relatively. But it gives you something to fight over, more strategic locations, as opposed to hunting for the cities. It also means you can target an opposing empire without having to fight them directly, by cutting off the sectors.

Mechanic: Cosmite



Where it says 180 (+5) – that’s the cosmite resource. If you look at the top right of the screenshot, just above the sector named “prime District,” you see a circular, purple crate on the map. I believe that is cosmite. It’s guarded by a stack of 4 units, which we know nothing about yet!

What we know:

It's a rare resource, used for higher level abilities and unit modification and higher level units. Cosmite is found in sectors, and from the screenshots we've seen, fairly unappealing sectors (well defended, don't have much other stuff in them.) →[Dev Diary](#).

Why it matters:

It seems a direct answer to the much lamented T4 "spam" (There is a pretty good [discussion on T4 units](#) at the official forums, ditto the [end game](#), both of which will be impacted by cosmite.) It also allows you a way to counter t4 units and abilities, by taking out their cosmite deposits. I am excited.

Mechanic: Unit modifications



*Seen here with 3 mods. I *hope* there are tooltips when you mouseover.*

What we know:

Right now, each unit has 3 possible modifications, that change it somehow. That could be better damage etc. We've yet to see the full scale of the potential here, but I believe Triumph are very very wary of simple % increases and would rather have mods that are more "fun." So a marine may get something like special electric ammo, or a flamer etc. Higher tier modifications will require cosmite. Modifications can be researched.

There will be some racial exclusivity, e.g. Kir'ko not being able to use Vanguard mods, although Amazons can. The details have not been confirmed. We don't know yet how changing mods will work, whether it requires you be in friendly territory, or at a specific base or what.

There is, imho, considerable scope to introduce asymmetry here. Kir'ko could, for example, go into a 1 or 2 turn cocoon anywhere on the map (friendly or enemy territory) and equip the modification that way. Vanguard could require the unit to be modified be in friendly territory, or in a sector with a city, to represent factories and supply chains.

Why it matters:

There will be a whole meta based around rock paper scissoring your basic units. Combine with the rarity of cosmite leading to fewer T4 units, and composition wise at least, you will be seeing MANY more T1 and T2 units, and, with mods system, more variety therein, under player control. There is always the risk that a few stable builds will emerge.

Mechanic: Production and Research Rollover



(a) I couldn't think of a better picture to illustrate production



(b) And obviously neither to present research...

What we know:

Unused production points get moved to the next thing in the queue. I originally used a Knight and Halberdiers to illustrate this, but Ninjew kindly pointed out that it confused things because Knights are hard countered by Halberdiers, and it ran the risk of turning into a higher tier versus lower tier discourse. While that is a part of it, I don't want to go in depth here on that, as there are several current discussions, linked earlier, under the cosmite summary..

So, imagine you have a city, in AoW3, with 85 hammers. A Dwarf axeman costs 55 hammers. A firstborn costs 187 hammers. Your city will take 1 turn per axeman, and waste 30 hammers. 3 turns per firstborn, and waste 68 hammers.

Under the new system, your wasted hammers will contribute to the next thing being produced. It means that in 2 turns, you don't get 2 axemen, you get 3 (total hammer 165, carry forward 5 hammers). It means 3 full turns, at 85 hammers, gives you 255 hammers, or 4 Axes, with 35 going forward.

Why it matters:

In the above example, that was just a few turns. Multiply that over the course of a game, and gate T3 and T4 units behind cosmite, and what will hopefully happen is that the higher tier units are much more specialised and impressive and decisive, when they show up, and that lower tier units will be much more economically viable. Lest you think higher tier units are now obsolete, recall that army size is still 6 per stack, and that the adjacent hex rule means you will be using 4 against 3 (or vice versa) armies max, most of the time, so T4 and 3 units will still be useful simply for their concentrated firepower.

Regarding research: Personally, I never had a problem with this, but I can see the inner min/maxer coming to the fore. It's worth mentioning that there will be racial research and secret tech research, at the least, so it appears research will be more important, and presumably more structured?

Mechanic: Combat

What we know:

We know lots – here are the dev diaries discussing [combat](#), [units](#) and [more units](#) - some of it already discussed, but here I'd like to talk a bit more about the damage formula, which is:

$$D = I \times 0.9^R$$

I = Incoming damage, D = Actual damage taken, R = Damage resistance (sum of shields, armor and elemental resistance)

OK I am not very good at maths, so let's break it down. Bear with me, it's a big change from AoW3.



(a) The lancer, the first amazon unit to be revealed.



(b) The hidden, a sneaky T2 from the Kir'ko.

Let's look at the Amazon Lancer:

It deals 18 damage. It can deal more because it gets bonuses for charging etc, but let's work with 18. Note also it's defence, of 1, but a shield value of 3. Shield gets added to the defence, for frontal attacks, meaning a head on attack will hit 4 defence. Flank it and you will hit 1 defence.

Now look at the Kir'ko Hidden:

It deals 16 damage and has a defence of 1. So, that formula means, if the Lancer hits the Hidden: Damage received = 18×0.9^4 or 16.2 damage.

If the Hidden hits the lancer, it is 16×0.9^4 (frontal attack) = $16 \times 0.9 \times 0.9 \times 0.9 \times 0.9 = 10.5$ damage.

The takeaway from this is, keep your Hidden hidden (they can teleport on the battlefield) and use them to snipe heroes, and not in direct combat with Lancers.

Now look at the Phoenix Walker (on page XVII) A defence of 8 is, therefore, really quite good. In AoW3, a defence of 8 would be... laughable.

If the Lancer hits for 18, the Walker takes 18×0.9^8 , which leaves 7.74, as in barely scratches it. I'll stop there because maths is most assuredly not my strong point. I'll also caveat all of the above by admitting I don't know if the lancer hits 3 times or not. I assume 3 times, in which case it'll kill a hidden in one round, but require 3 rounds against a Phoenix Walker.

I'll wrap up by briefly mentioning that cities, and possibly sectors too, get an automated defence garrison, so the days of ninjaging everything with a crow are gone.

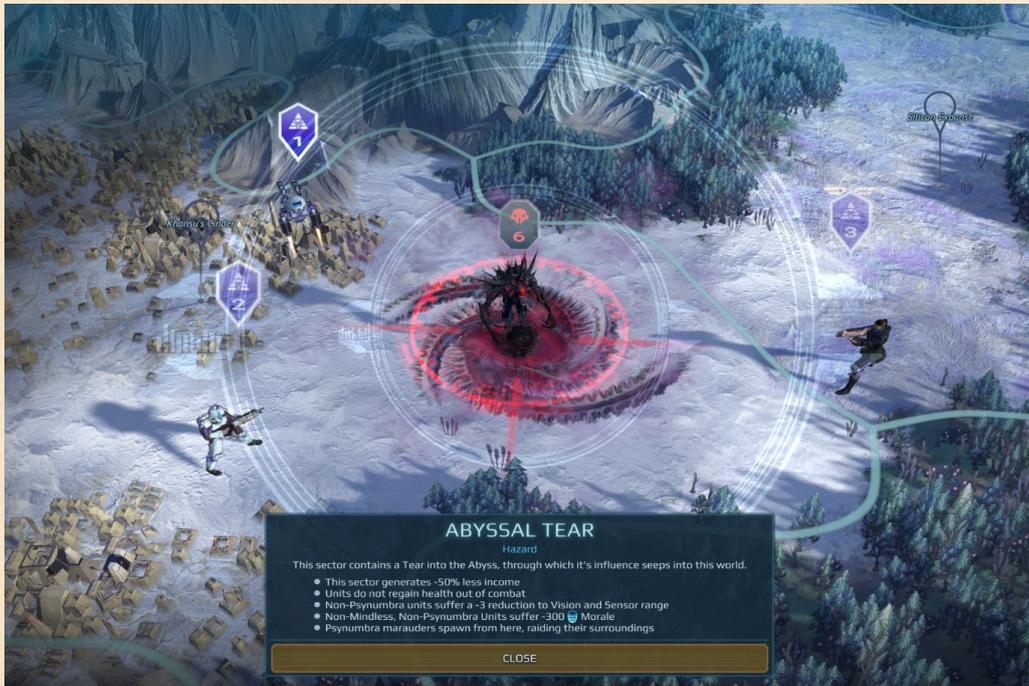
And there is also a radar type system in the game which gives you information beyond vision range.



Lennart Sas says there will be techs to increase and decrease this (range, accuracy, detail.) I predict much fun to be had from attempting to spook your opponent by having many tier 1 units spread out, so they think that a huge army is approaching, or, the inverse, that they think you are bluffing, but it really is a huge army, or that you are bringing in one very strong stack, but they think it's just one unit. Mindgames!

Lastly, dwellings are back, but apart from the theming, and apparently a more integrated quest system and independent AI programming (as in every dwelling/independent city will be a mini player of sorts and will attack you if you annoy them) the system is substantially similar to the existing Aow3 system.

I end this with one last picture, that of the confirmed Psynumbra, which are a secret tech, as in you can choose this when you start the game.



How will Vanguard + Psynumbra work?

Just before printing our astrologists came with breathtaking news: Apparently it is possible to see glimpses of the future when paying 90 minutes of your time to the shrines of purple T or Red Y (the latter is cheaper on your time).

Announcement Board

Standings in current Tournaments:

The Live MP Duel Tournament 2018:

Is in the 2nd round: The matchups are: **Petracker** vs **Loki**, **Orlyzz** vs **SleepingDog**, **Spellcaster** vs **Griff** and **DreadReapr** vs **Nemesis_Zero**.

In the losers bracket **Gashie**, **advo**, **Techno** and **Lck** are waiting for the "fallout" from Turn 2 to face them.

PBEM Duel Tournament 2017:

The PBEM duel Tournament 2017 final has been determined! **GabtheGab** has won his match as human Theocrat against **Hiliadan** and will face **Jean_de_Metz** again. It is GabtheGabs 7th game so he'll have to play elven, goblin or draconian Rogue in the finals, Jean_de_Metz who won every match so far still can choose between goblins, draconians, dwarves or Tigran Archdruid or Necromancer.

The videos of Hiliadan vs GabtheGab have started to pop up in Hiliadans [youtube](#) channel.



The PBEM 2v2 team tournament 2016:

Started in 2016 this double elimination tournament is in it's final stage, the finals... Facing off against each other are: Team **Coup de Grâce** consisting of **Tussel** and **Gabthegab** (undefeated until now) and Team **Bastards of the North** formed by **Ezekiel** and **AIXStormrage** that fought their way through the losers bracket and now have the chance to take revenge for being sent to the losers bracket by team Coup de Grâce already in the 2nd round of the tournament.

3vs3 PBEM Tournament 2018:

4 Teams are participating, each consisting of 1 expert player and 2 newer players. So far no match has ended. The teams are:

- **Team 1st** led by the tournament organiser Skuns453Lirik902 with the other members being Nub Nub and Akinos. They play against:
- **3 fistfuls of wonder** led by Ezekiel and his companions Longinus and DiaEmperador.
- **Dos Equis XX** led by (brew)master \$eer together with El Lobo and Badok is currently facing:
- **Fancy Name Team** led by AIXStormrage with his faithful game assistants Zytozid and Fluksen.^a

We will keep you updated if anything happens!

^aDisclaimer: Fluksen is a cheap smurf of Fluks who writes this text, so beware :D

Mixed:

2vs2 PBEM Team Tournament

Hear ye Strategic Masterminds, teamplayers and exploiters of game mechanics: The 2018 PBEM 2v2 team tournament is near!

So grab your strategically retarded friend and prove that you can win nonetheless.

The sign up has started on [the-battlefield!](#)



Tactical Challenge - episode 01

You want to improve your skills in tactical battles? Or you think you're already the best and you want some challenging opponents? Come try yourself vs Imanuit, a Frostling Sorcerer AI with an impressive army! So far, six players have beaten the level 1 of the Challenge and only two players completed its level 2! Follow the [instructions here](#) to set up the challenge, design and build carefully your army with the limited resources, fight Imanuit, and share the results with the rest of the community! Maybe the [video of the victory of Blackwill](#) can inspire you?





You always wanted to see a:
Dragon?

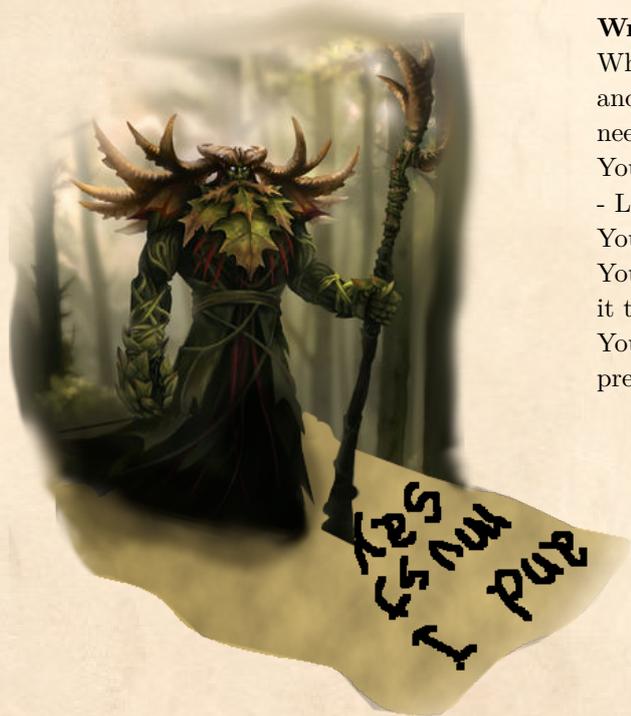
But don't like to get burned? - Here's your chance! Visit the new exhibition of waxworks in Stronghelm. Everything you've ever heard of and more - right here:

Tibbles Waxworks
 Sculpture Alley 5
 Stronghelm (Commonwealth)

Veterans and Tigran kittens get a discount at the entrance.

The Shadow Realms Mod:

Bugs? Shadows? Darkness? Does that tickle your inner Goblin? The gates to the Shadow realm are about to open and brave souls have the possibility to venture into these promising lands even before the gates are fully opened. Want to know more? Contact [Gatemaster Hiliadan](#) for ways into the Shadow realm.



Writers and Artists needed:

- Whistleblowers, Artists, Writers, Poets, Modders and virtual limelight hogs: **The Stronghelm Globe** needs your input!
- You have leaked intelligence reports about fights? - Leak them to us!
- You wrote a poem/story? - Write it to us!
- You drew an okey-ish (or better) drawing? - Send it to us!
- You've been busy in the workshop and want to present the results?

Contact us:
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