



Dragonfell

for the Psion Series 3

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Life was draining from Dragonfell. The wizards had done all they could to keep the plains verdant, the trees in bloom, and the mountains full of natural beauty. But their battle was lost, and the farmers, woodcutters and miners had all left for better lives elsewhere.

The land now lies barren, and is to the better liking of more sinister creatures. Fierce ogres stalk the plains, dark elves hide in the decaying forests, and swift dragons have claimed the mountains. The wizards are still around, ever adaptable, studying the new situation and wondering how they can exploit it.

The two ancient citadels that watch over the land, once allied with one another, now look jealously over the country with its dwindling resources, greedy and suspicious of one another. Where once wagons full of trade goods flowed between the citadels, armies will soon roam instead.

Dragonfell is a strategy game for one or two players on the Psion Series 3. Players move armies of ogres, elves, dragons and wizards across the land, occupying regions and exploiting their resources to recruit more troops. When opposing troops try to occupy the same region, battle commences, and the players move their units individually around a battle map, resembling a strange game of chess.

Chapter 2

Getting Started

Dragonfell runs on the original Psion Series 3 with 128K or 256K RAM. It is best installed on a Flash or RAM SSD to save internal memory, especially on 128K models. The game also runs in compatibility mode on the Psion Series 3a, 3c, 3mx, and on the Siena and workAbout.

2.1 Installing the Game



Figure 2.1: Using Psion-I to install Dragonfell on the Series 3

With your usual method of transferring files to the Psion (MCLINK, PsiWin, Comms, etc.) copy the **DRAGON.APP** file to the **\APP** directory on your preferred drive. Then make a directory **\APP\DRAGON** and copy all the other files into there.

With the game present on your machine, go to the System screen and press Psion+I to install the game's icon there. Remember to set the drive to wherever you installed the game files so that the Dragon application can be found. Once done, there will be a new icon and file list on your System screen.

2.2 Launching the Program



Figure 2.2: The Dragonfell icon on the system screen

Dragonfell is a fully EPOC compliant application that can operate on multiple saved game files. Initially there are none, so selecting Dragon under the Dragonfell icon will begin a new game. If in future you have multiple games in progress, their names will be listed under the Dragonfell icon, and you can instantly load one of them in the same way you open a database or document.



Figure 2.3: Setting up a new game

2.3 Setting Up a Game

On loading Dragonfell for the first time, you will see the title screen, and after that you will see the New Game menu. This consists of four options, allowing you to select whether to play against a friend, or against one of a selection of computer opponents of various levels of play.

Once your players are selected, the program will take a few moments to set up a new game. Then control will be passed to the Strategic Map screen, where you will start to send out armies into the country.

Chapter 3

The Strategic Map



Figure 3.1: The strategic map at the start of the game

The Strategic Map is where you see a view of the whole country. You will use this map to control production, send out armies, and observe the approach of the enemy.

If two people are playing, then you will initially see a screen telling player 1 or 2 to press **SPACE**. This indicates that that player should take the Psion and the opponent should refrain from looking at the screen. Some of the information shown on the strategic map is classified and confidential.

3.1 The Strategic Map Display

Like most screens in the game, the display is split into three sections. On the left is the Empire Panel, which shows how many of each unit type is in your empire.

On the right is the Terrain Panel, which shows the terrain of the currently selected region, and how many of each resource that square brings to the player who controls it. These resources are what allow you to build and maintain your armies.

In the middle is the map itself. It is split into 25 regions, forming a grid of five rows and five columns. Each region can accommodate an army of up to ten units. Two of the regions contain citadels; the first player's is at the bottom left, and the second at the top right.

Beside each citadel is a small vertical bar half filled with black. This indicates how many units are occupying the citadel; since a full bar represents 10 units, these half-filled bars show that you start with 5 units in your citadel.

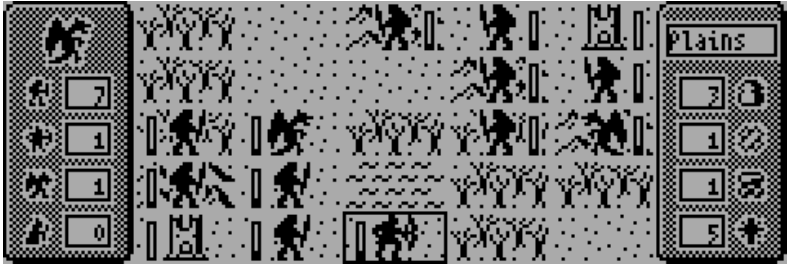


Figure 3.2: Armies on the map later in the game

As the game progresses, you will start to see armies shown on the map. These armies will be represented by the icon of their strongest unit, with a counter bar to show how many units are in that army. The citadel regions always show the citadel icon, with the counter bar indicating how many units are present.

3.2 Setting Production

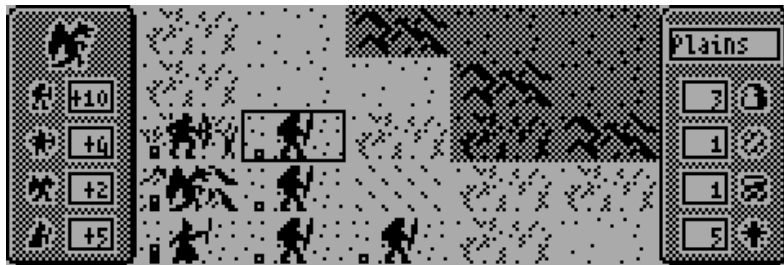


Figure 3.3: Setting production after some expansion

Each turn, you will want to check your production. The Production option on the Strategic menu enters production mode. In production mode, the map changes. Regions that you control, currently just your citadel, are shown as normal. Regions controlled by the enemy are shaded dark, while regions controlled by nobody are shaded light.

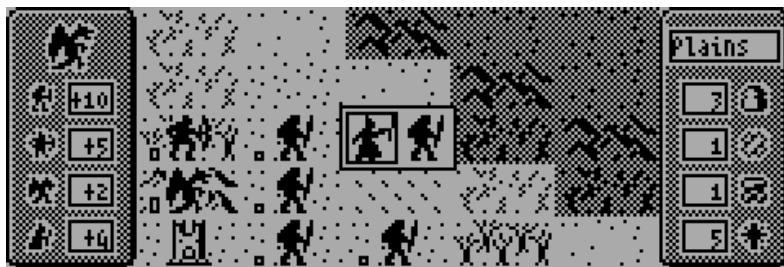


Figure 3.4: When changing production at the citadel, you have a choice of unit

To change the production of a region you control, move the cursor there with your cursor control keys, and select Change from the Production menu (shortcut key SPACE). In most regions, that will

toggle on or off production of the unit associated with the local terrain. The citadel is different: you have a choice of units, either a wizard, or the unit associated with the region's terrain.

When turning on production in a region, the icon of the unit being produced will be shown on the map. Alongside it will be a counter bar, showing how near completion that unit is. Different units take different numbers of turns to produce. Be careful of over-production; if you have more units of a type than you can afford, the unpaid units will desert, potentially leaving regions exposed to danger or abandoned altogether.

As implied earlier, selecting Change in a region currently producing a unit will cancel that production. Beware, as any progress in producing the unit will be lost, and have to begin anew if you restart production.

Note that controlled regions are still contributing their resources to the empire, even if they are not producing a unit locally.

When you have finished reviewing production, select Done from the Production menu, or press the shortcut key Esc. The map will be restored to its former state and you can issue movement orders to your armies.

3.3 Issuing Movement Orders



Figure 3.5: Issuing movement orders to units in a region

Before issuing orders you might want to explore the map a little. Just like in production mode, the cursor keys move the cursor around. If you move to any region on the map and select Info from the Strategic menu, the right hand panel will show the local terrain information.

To issue movement orders to your armies, move the cursor to a region where you have an army, initially just your citadel, then select Movement from the Strategic menu, or press the shortcut key **SPACE**. You are now in movement mode, and a small window is superimposed over the map.

In this movement window you will see a line of units present in the region, one of which is highlighted by a cursor. Beneath the row of units is the name of the currently selected unit, and its current orders. Initially all the units should be set to guard, which means the unit will stay put.

Pressing left or right will move the cursor to an adjacent unit. To change the orders of the currently selected unit, select one of the directions from the Move menu, or Guard from the Orders menu. If you give the unit orders to move out, its icon will be shaded. You can still change the orders; setting the unit back to Guard will show the unit in solid black again. This shading allows you to see easily which units will move out and which units will stay.

When finished moving, select Done from the Orders menu. The movement window will close and you will return to the map view. Nothing moves right now: both players will give their orders, and then all armies will move in a turn processing phase.

Once opposing armies occupy adjacent regions, there is a risk of battle. You might move into an occupied enemy region, the enemy might invade your region, or both sides might move to occupy the same empty region.

There is also a risk your units might not be able to move, or might move into an unexpected ambush. Armies move in random order, and if an army's region is invaded before it has moved out, then that army will have to stay put to defend, instead of obeying the movement orders that it was given.

Finally, beware of accidentally abandoning a region you want to

control. Moving all units out of a region without moving in other units to replace them will return the region to independence, abandoning all production and resource generation. The exception is the player's own citadel region, where the presence of the citadel itself is enough to maintain control.

3.4 When All is Done

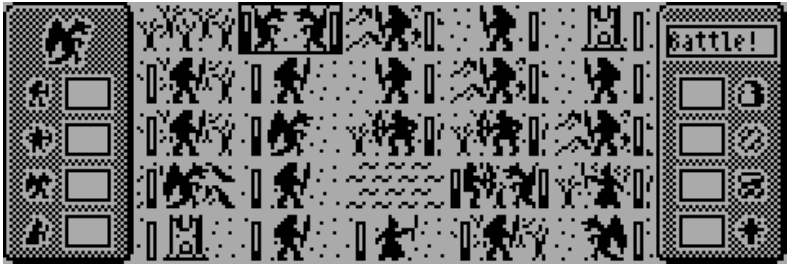


Figure 3.6: A battle is about to begin

When you have given all the orders you want to on the strategic map, it's time to watch those orders be obeyed. You do this with the End turn option on the Strategic menu, or the shortcut key Esc. There is a confirmation dialog box to prevent you from accidentally ending your turn prematurely.

If there is a second human player yet to give orders, then the "press SPACE" message will be shown again, and the Psion should be handed to the second player while the first player looks away. If instead the computer is the second player, a message will appear to confirm that the computer is taking its turn.

Once the second player, whether human or computer, is done, then it is truly time to watch the outcome. In a two player game, a message will tell both players to press SPACE, indicating that both should now watch the screen.

The strategic map will be shown again, but this time the right panel will indicate what part of the processing phase is happening now. First is Movement, and you will see armies moving around the map according to the orders the players gave them. Where two armies try to occupy the same region, you will see both armies squeeze together on the map. This indicates where a battle will take place before this turn is done.

Next is unit production, indicated by Produce shown in the right panel. Before new units can be recruited, the game checks for desertion. If players have recruited more units than they can afford, the unpaid units will disappear from the strategic map. Units drawn up for battle will not desert, but elsewhere you may see numbers decrease or regions may be abandoned altogether. With this out of the way, actual production can begin.

In unconested regions controlled by one player, resources will be gathered, and if new units are produced, these are shown on the map, with the counter bars being updated. In regions occupied by the maximum ten units, and regions where armies are drawn up for battle, production will be paused.

Next, battles are resolved one at a time. For each battle, players will adjourn to the battle map discussed later. As each battle is over, the strategic map is updated and shown to the players. After all battles are resolved, the game then checks for overall victory. In the absence of a victory, control goes back to the first player, who can give their orders for the next turn.

3.5 Winning the Game

The game is won when one player occupies the enemy citadel uncontested. When this happens, a short animation shows the collapse of the defeated citadel, and a victory message is shown.

In the unlikely event that both players occupy each other's citadel on the same turn, play will continue until one player evicts the intruders from their citadel. If both players evict their opponents at



Figure 3.7: Victory message in a 1-player game

the same time, the citadels return to their original control and the game still continues. Effective control of both citadels is necessary to win the game.

Chapter 4

The Battle Map

When battle commences in a region, the players will be transported to the battle map. As with the strategic map, in a two-player game a brief announcement screen will indicate that the Psion be handed to one player while the other looks away.

4.1 The Tactical Display

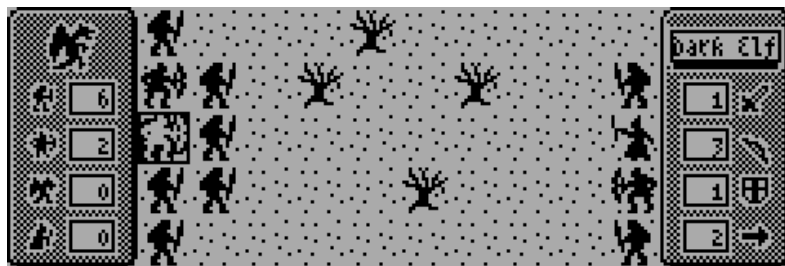


Figure 4.1: The tactical display at the start of a battle

When a player takes their turn on the battle map, the screen changes.

The left panel still displays unit types, but now the figures indicate the number of each unit type that the player has on the battlefield.

The central section is the battle map. Instead of a 5×5 grid as on the strategic map, the battle map is a 10×5 map on which the units from the region under attack are arrayed. Initially, armies occupy opposite ends of the map, as you will see when you first enter battle. In some regions you will see terrain features on the map, and if attacking the citadel, you will see the citadel wall.

The right panel now indicates the currently selected unit, which will also be highlighted on the map. the name of the unit is at the top, with a health bar just underneath. Units of all types start the battle with five health points, and the health bar should be shaded black to indicate the unit is at full health. The four stats underneath the health bar are attack power, attack range, defence shield, and movement speed.

4.2 The Turn Order

At the moment, you are giving orders to your units. The orders won't be followed immediately: as with the strategic map, both players give orders in turn, and then watch the results together.

When the orders are followed, this happens in a set sequence. First units are healed, then attacks occur, then fleeing units disappear from the field, and finally if both sides are still present, the units move.

4.3 Moving Around the Field

At the start of a battle, units will be at opposite ends of the battlefield. Players will need to advance their units into closer contact before they can engage one another in combat.

To issue a movement order to a unit, move your cursor over the unit and select it with the Select option from the Tactical menu,

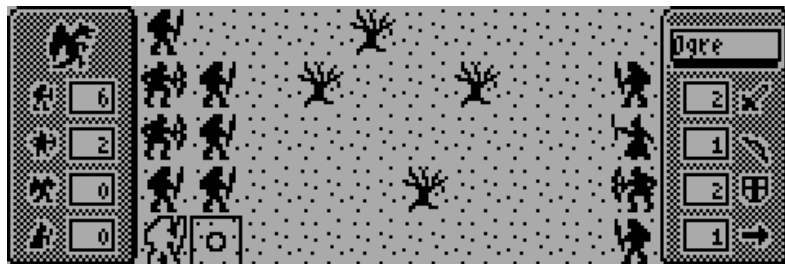


Figure 4.2: Giving a movement order on the battlefield

or use the shortcut key **ENTER**. The unit will be highlighted and its details shown in the right panel. Then move the cursor to the square you want to move to, and choose **Move** from the Tactical menu, or use the shortcut key **SPACE**.

The game will only let you move a unit to a destination within its movement range, indicated by the movement speed stat shown in the right hand panel. A unit with a speed of 1 can move to an orthogonally adjacent square. Diagonally adjacent squares are regarded as being 2 squares away, as there is no diagonal movement in the game.

When a movement order has been issued, a circle symbol will appear on the destination square to indicate the movement order. This will disappear when you select some other square, but will reappear if you select this unit again.

4.4 Attacking the Enemy

When units are within range of one another, attacks can be made. A selected unit's attack range is shown by the bow symbol in the right panel. A unit with a range of 1 can attack adjacent units, while higher values indicate ranged combat like archery or magic.

To attack an enemy, first select the unit you want to attack with.

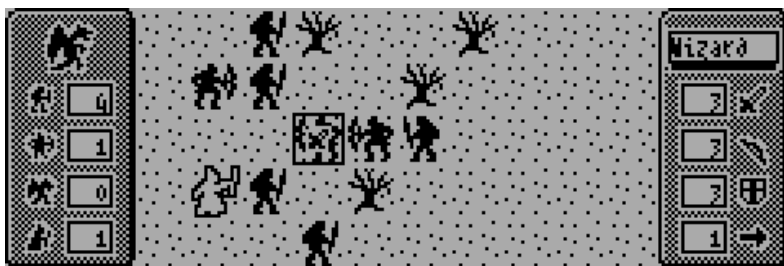


Figure 4.3: Giving an order to attack an enemy

Then move the cursor to your target, and choose Attack from the Tactical menu. A sword symbol should appear on the target unit to indicate the order has been given. The game will only allow you to attack targets within the attacking unit's range.

It is allowed, and even expected, that you will attack a target with multiple units. The combat system rewards the use of units in concert with one another; one-on-one combat is a hard slog with an uncertain outcome.

4.5 Healing Injured Units

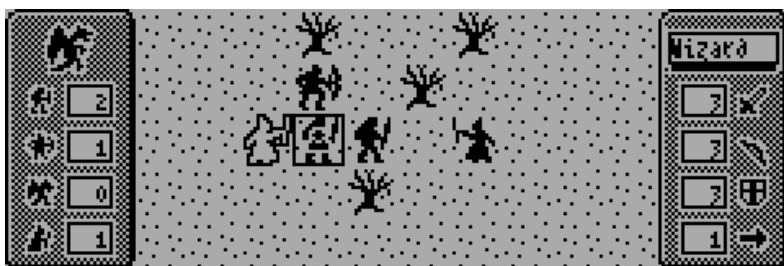


Figure 4.4: Ordering a wizard to heal an adjacent unit

If you have a wizard on the battlefield, then you can heal injured units, that is, units with fewer than five health points. Each wizard can heal one other unit in a turn, restoring it to a full five health points. The injured unit must be adjacent to the wizard who is healing it.

To order a wizard to heal a unit, select the wizard first. Then move the cursor to the adjacent injured unit, and choose Heal from the Tactical menu. You should see a small potion bottle appear on the injured unit.

4.6 Fleeing the Battle

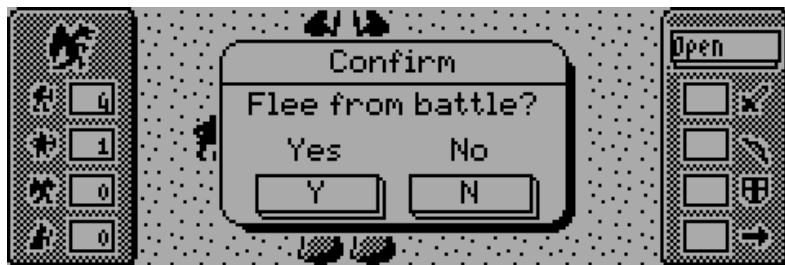


Figure 4.5: Fleeing the battlefield when all is lost

Sometimes in a battle you become hopelessly outnumbered. This might even occur right at the start, if you make an ill-advised attack on the strategic map, or if not all the units you intended can join the battle. The game does not force you to play through a hopeless battle, but offers you the opportunity to flee at any time.

To flee from battle, choose Flee from the Tactical menu. There is no need to select a unit first; all units will flee together. To prevent accidental fleeing, a confirmation dialog will appear. On confirming your decision, your turn will be over. This will override any orders you may have given your units already this turn.

Fleeing not only saves time, but can also preserve valuable units. Forces that flee will often be able to make their way to the home citadel. As long as the citadel is not itself under attack, and as long as it has room to accommodate the fleeing units, fleeing units will appear at the citadel once you return to the strategic map.

Flight occurs after attacks in the turn processing phase, so there is chance for the victor to pick off fleeing units and prevent them from returning to the citadel.

4.7 Watching the Action

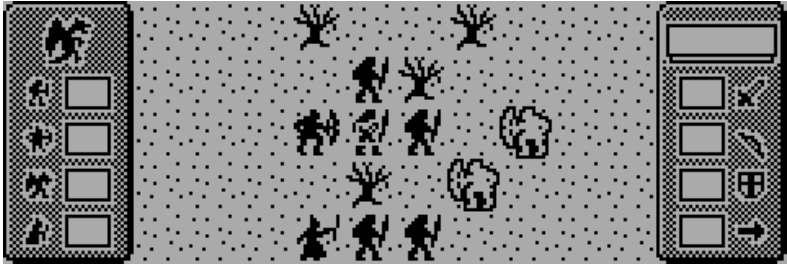


Figure 4.6: Watching combat take place during the battle

When you have finished giving orders, end your turn with the End Turn option on the Tactical menu. Once both players have issued orders, the action will commence. In a two-player game, the players will be called to watch the battle.

The first phase of the action is healing. Each wizard that has been given a heal order will be highlighted in turn, with the potion symbols showing which unit the wizard is healing. That unit will have its health points restored to 5.

After healing comes attacks. Each unit attacked will be processed in turn, with the sword symbol indicating the unit under attack. All of the units attacking that target will be highlighted.

Their attack strengths will be combined and, after subtracting the target's armour value, the resulting damage will be subtracted from the target's health. If the target's health is reduced to zero, the target dies and is removed from the map.

Every attack causes a minimum of 1 damage, even if the target's armour exceeds the combined attack strength. That means even a heavily protected unit like the wizard is not completely safe from attack by smaller units. Most one-on-one attacks cause 1 damage, so to gain an advantage you need to use your units in concert to try and exceed the target's armour by as great a value as possible.

If all units on one side are destroyed, the action will end here. Otherwise any fleeing units will now leave the battlefield. Again, if only one side is left on the field, the action stops here.

The final phase of the battle is movement. All units with movement orders will move towards their respective destinations. Units will move together one step at a time, and will attempt to find their way around obstacles, waiting for units ahead to move out of the way before attempting to step around them. Where two units are attempting to move into the same square, the faster unit will have priority.

In each phase of the battle, the order in which units act is largely random. Sometimes this has little effect, but sometimes it can matter. For instance, if two units on their last health point attack one another, the unit to attack first will defeat its target before retaliation occurs. When two units of equal speed attempt to move into the same square, it is uncertain which one will gain the position.

After all turn phases have taken place, and if the battle is still ongoing, control goes back to player 1 who gives their orders for the next turn.

4.8 Winning the Battle

A battle is won when one side is no longer present on the field, either by being defeated or by fleeing the battle. The victorious side will

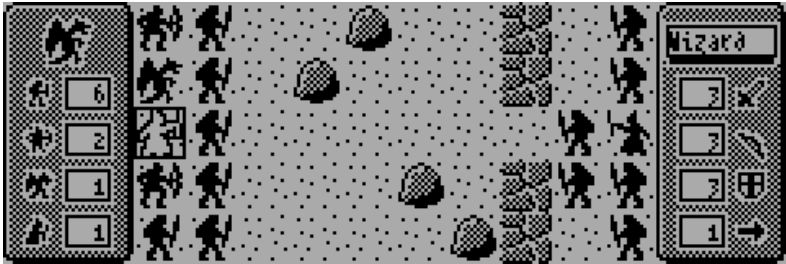


Figure 4.7: Possibly the final battle...

then occupy the region with the units they have remaining.

Once the battle is over, the players are taken back to the strategic map, and the region in which the battle took place is briefly highlighted to show the result. If there are more battles this turn, the players are brought back to the tactical map to fight the next one.

Chapter 5

Reference

5.1 The Terrain

There are four types of terrain on the strategic map. Their effects are as follows.

- *Plains* are the most common type of terrain. When controlled by a player, a plains region will generate three food, one wood and one ore per turn. Ogres can be recruited from plains squares. There are twelve plains regions on the strategic map.
- *Forests* are where elves can be recruited. A forest region controlled by a player generates one food, three wood and one ore per turn. There are eight forest regions on the strategic map.
- *Mountains* are where dragons are recruited. A mountain region controlled by a player generates one food, one wood, and three ores per turn. There are four mountain regions on the strategic map.
- *Water* is the only region that affects movement around the strategic map. No unit can enter the water. while the dragon

could theoretically fly over it, there is nowhere for the dragon to rest, so even dragons will not enter. Water is therefore best used as a bulwark to protect adjacent regions from attack from its direction. There is one water region on the map.

Any type of region except water can accommodate a Citadel. A citadel adds five mana to the resource income for that region, and allows the option to recruit wizards in the region as an alternative to the unit normally produced in its terrain.

The tactical map has four different types of terrain. The features that appear on a tactical map are determined by the region's terrain and by the presence or absence of a citadel.

- *Open* terrain is present in all regions, and any unit can move into an open terrain square during the battle. Dragons, however, can fly over the other types of terrain.
- *Trees* occur in forests, They completely block movement for all ground units, which must move around them. But ranged combat units can fire past them.
- *Rocks* occur in the mountains. they have a similar effect to trees in the forest, blocking movement but allowing ranged units to fire over them.
- *Walls* appear in citadel regions, in addition to any other features present on the tactical map. so a citadel in a forest would feature trees and walls. Walls separate off one end of the tactical map, which represents the citadel, though there is a gap to allow units to enter and leave.

5.2 The Units

There are four different unit types in the game. On the strategic map these are stacked into armies. Unit statistics relevant to the strategic map are their native region type where they can be recruited, the

time to recruit, and upkeep cost per turn. Movement is to adjacent regions, for all unit types.

On the tactical map the units are shown individually. The number of each type the player has is shown in the left panel for convenience; the units can also simply be counted on the map. The right panel shows for the selected unit the stats relevant to the battle: attack strength, attack range, defensive armour, and movement speed. Current health is shown as a black bar under the unit name; all units start a battle with 5 health points.

- *Ogres* are strong melee units with a thick armoured skin, though slow to move around the battlefield. A massed formation of them can be formidable. Native to plains, they take only 1 turn to recruit. Each ogre consumes one food per turn. On the battlefield they have 2 strength, 1 range, 2 armour, and 1 movement.
- *Dark Elves* are useful archers who can move swiftly around the battlefield. They are Only lightly armoured and firing arrows that cause little damage individually, yet they are indispensable because they can maintain a safe distance from enemy melee units and fire at them with impunity. Native to the forest, an elf can be recruited in 2 turns. Each elf requires 4 wood per turn (or 2 from the citadel). On the battlefield, elves have 1 strength, 3 range, 1 armour and 2 movement.
- *Dragons* in Dragonfell are a peculiar breed. More lightly armoured than their cousins elsewhere, they can fly swiftly over obstacles on the battlefield. But their fiery breath makes them formidable, and they are best used for fly-by attacks where they charge their opponent, strike, and continue to a safe distance before attacking again. Dragons are native to the mountains, where they take 3 turns to recruit. Their strange digestion system requires 9 ores per turn, or 3 from the citadel. On the battlefield they have 3 strength, 1 range, 1 armour, and

3 movement; unlike other units they can fly over trees, rocks and walls.

- *Wizards* are expert magic users who have occupied the land since better days. Their magical abilities give them strength over long range, magical protection, and the ability to heal on the battlefield. Native to no particular region, they are recruited only at the citadel, taking 4 turns to do so. They require 4 mana per turn, the citadel producing enough for 5 wizards. On the battlefield they have 3 strength, 3 range, 3 armour and 1 movement. The range of their healing spell is just 1, requiring injured units to approach closely.

5.3 Computer Players

There are 3 levels of computer player: easy, fair, and hard.

- *Easy* computer opponents are recommended for your first games. They advance without much thought towards your citadel, gaining in numbers as they occupy territory. They pay no heed to your movements, nor do they stop to consider if a battle is advisable before blundering into your armies. On the battlefield, they will rush headlong to engage your forces without considering their own safety. Once you have come to grips with the game's rules, you should easily outwit them.
- *Fair* computer opponents approach more carefully. They will consider which regions are most advantageous to take, and will try to avoid initiating pointless battles. On the battlefield, they will remember which units they have weakened and continue to pummel them to wear down your forces. They will also make better use of ranged units, maintaining distance from the enemy where possible. These opponents provide a welcome challenge when you are comfortable with the game.

- *Hard* computer opponents take things a step further. They pay more attention to your movements on the strategic map, reinforcing their borders and even drawing back to do so where necessary. On the battlefield they pay more attention to danger points, hitting enemies where they can concentrate their attacks, and keeping their ranged units away from areas where massed enemies could one-shot them. These opponents will test you when you feel you have truly mastered the game.

Chapter 6

Acknowledgements

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Images for the manual cover and title screen are composite, and include work by AdinaVoicu, DreamDigitalArtist, GDJ, clipartist.net, and OpenClipart-Vectors. All other art work in the game is my own.

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 **CYNINGSTAN**