

10 Translations

of role playing games

Role playing is a global spread phenomenon, and since the publications are naturally written only in one language, there is of course the need for translations, so that every system is available in most countries.

But to translate such a complex network of information, sometimes even written in a non-standard language, is a challenge.

There have been a lot of discussions about translations within the scene, and some game masters prefer the original sources, as long as they understand the language they are written in. But since most role playing games are written in English, this is, at least for most German players, no problem.

In this chapter, I will try to give you a short view on the translation of *DSA* into English, on the guide for authors of adventures with hints for translations for *Cthulhu*, on some difficulties a translator is confronted with while working within a confined area of an existing license and finally on some oddities and special cases.

The translation of *Das schwarze Auge*

In the middle of the 1980s the publisher of *DSA* decided to translate their product into other languages, such as French (*L'Œil noir*), Italian (*Uno Sguardo nel Buio*) and Dutch (*Het Oog des Meesters*), but shortly after that those publications were discontinued due to lack of success.

In 2003 another try at establishing the game in anglophone countries was made. While a few novels had been published under the name 'Realms of Arkania', it was decided to stay closer to the original brand of the rule books. The literal translation 'The Black Eye' was rejected since it means a bruise at one's eye and therefore sounded more like a joke than like a serious game. The publishers decided to call the game 'The Dark Eye'. This translation is especially interesting since it is one of the very few German games that have ever been translated into the English language.

The translation into the English language has been made by two German native speakers, namely Dr. Rainer Nagel and Alexandra Velten. They tried to translate the game in such a way that names of places and NPCs kept their original