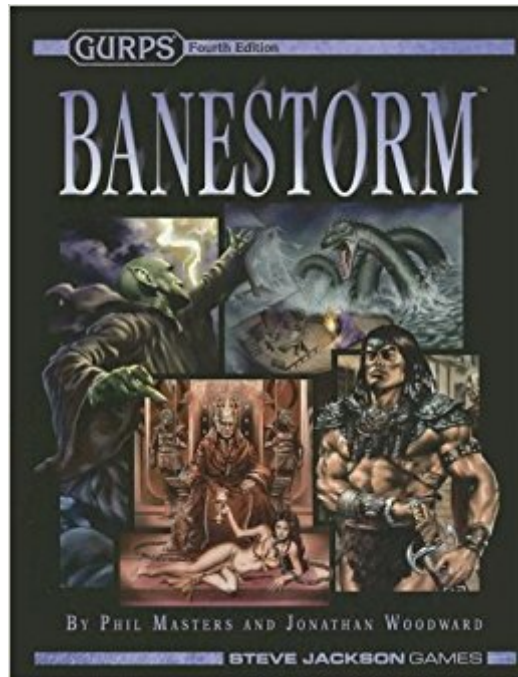




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GURPS Banestorm (GURPS 4th Edition Roleplaying)



Synopsis

Welcome to the land of Yrth, a magical realm of incredibly varied races and monsters - including people snatched from our Earth and other worlds by the cataclysmic Banestorm! Whole villages were transported - from such diverse locales as medieval England, France, Germany, and the Far East. Now humans struggle with dwarves, elves, and each other. The Crusades aren't ancient history here - they're current events! Characters can journey from the windswept plains of the Nomad Lands - where fierce Nordic warriors seek a valiant death to earn a seat in Valhalla - to Megalos, the ancient empire where magic and political intrigue go hand in hand. Or trek south to the Muslim lands of al-Wazif and al-Haz to explore the forbidden city of Geb'al-Din. This book updates the original Yrth of GURPS Third Edition Fantasy and Fantasy Adventures. It provides GMs with a complete world background - history, religion, culture, politics, races, and a detailed, full-color map - everything needed to start a GURPS campaign. Phil Masters (Discworld and Hellboy RPGs) and Jonathan Woodward (Hellboy and GURPS Ogre) have added new peoples, places, and plots, as well as lots more on magic and mysticism, all of which conforms to the just-released GURPS Fantasy and GURPS Magic. So prepare to make your own mark on Yrth. Plunder elven ruins while evading the desert natives. Play a peasant-born hero . . . an orcish pirate . . . a Muslim double agent commanded to infiltrate the Hospitallers. Yrth awaits the legend of you!

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Customer Reviews

Banestorm is set on the fictional world of Yrth where a group of elves seeking to banish orcs instead unleash a spell that brings other races, including humans to their world. Yrth is a different fantasy world, from more traditional settings, that players will be used to. Banestorm is a very thorough

source book detailing the world of Yrth. History, geography, currency even languages are among the features detailed in the book. Adventures involving traders or diplomats can be as exciting as adventures with wizards and warriors.

This is a complete campaign setting, that ties in to the Infinite Worlds campaign theme. It is a fantasy setting with a fair amount of background info to launch a decent campaign.

Another great book from sjgames. Banestorm is the perfect setting for your gurps fantasy adventures. With this book and the core books you can have hours of fun. Highly recommended.

[...]IntroductionFantasy has to walk a fine line. You need enough strangeness to make it clear that this is not our world (or at least, not as we know it), but you have to retain some similarities to our own mundane reality to give the roleplayers a frame of reference. Too far one way and you're in a historical setting. Too far the other and you've got confused players trying to digest bizarre cultures and races while the GM struggles to compose a decent adventure.GURPS Banestorm walks the line well.The basic concept is straightforward, and covered well in Chapter One, "History". A few thousand years ago, Yrth (the "hey, it could've been named worse" world of Banestorm) was home to elves, dwarves (and their gnome cousins), and orcs (and their ogre cousins), all of whom conform to familiar descriptions. Around the 11th century, one group of particularly intolerant elves decided that they'd rid the world of orcs at any cost, and spent their eternal lives researching and then performing the granddaddy of all spells, that which would summon the bane of the orcs to Yrth.It backfired, horribly. Or maybe it didn't. What it did do is form a great multidimensional storm (soon christened the Banestorm) which came and went, and brought beings from other worlds into Yrth whenever it manifested. From Gabrook, world of sands, it brought goblins and their hobgoblin cousins, kobolds, trolls, and reptile men. From Loren'dil, the green world, it brought centaurs, giants, halflings, sphinxes, and minotaurs. From Olokun, world of water, it brought merfolk, sharkmen, and dolphins (really intelligent ones). And from Earth, world of the Crusades and, eventually, Reality TV, it brought humans. Lots of humans.Within a millenium, the humans had pretty much taken over. They outbred the elder races, out-thought the less educated races, and out-warred pretty much everyone else -- even the orcs. (So, the renegade elves sort of got their wish, eh?) The humans brought their own religion, of course, and soon Ytarria (the main continent on Yrth and the focus of Banestorm was roughly divided into the Christian kingdoms and the Muslim lands.About the time the Crusades were dying out on Earth, the Banestorm started to subside. It spiked again a century

later, just long enough to populate Araterre (see below), but then dropped off. Nowadays, it's possible for a modern person to walk down a dark, foggy street and find himself in a medieval village, but it's fairly rare. And the few Connecticut Yankees who find themselves in the King's court quickly end up being thoroughly debriefed by the local authorities or wizards, and then magically mindwiped of any "dangerous" knowledge. The wizards of Yrth realize what threat certain technologies (especially gunpowder) are to their monopoly on flashy effects and battle magic, and the various rulers agree that such things are better kept out of peasant hands. So this unofficial conspiracy (an admitted plot contrivance, but a very useful one) keeps Yrth at a manageably medieval technology level, with a few anachronisms that either slipped through or were ruled harmless, such as clockwork and basic germ theory. Chapter Two, "Life in Ytarria", goes into detail on which ways magic has (and has failed to) supplant technology, along with the basic feudalistic, Islamic, and tribalistic forms of government that prevail here. With this background, Banestorm portrays a world ruled by humans but populated with familiar fantasy races. (The goblins are of the Elizabethan template, wily and cunning but usually too impulsive to amount to much, living comfortably amongst the humans in every major city.) History has repeated itself, with wars not only between the two major religions, but also within them, splintering each faith into multiple nations. Religion

It's hard to overstate just how much "realism" is brought to the table by the treatment of religion. Yrth is not the first fantasy world to feature real faiths, but it uses them well. Instead of just assuming that what happened on Earth would happen on Yrth, the religions evolved in their own ways instead, as covered in Chapter Three, "Religion". There was no Protestant Reform, though being cut off from the Pope meant that the various Archbishops eventually had to form the Curia, a high conclave responsible for setting precedent and religious law amongst the Christian lands. Protestantism began leaking into Yrth (via the newcomers of Araterre), but was driven underground after ruthless suppression. Magic was accepted as a gift from the Lord, especially after it proved so useful in dominating and converting (often at swordpoint) one's neighbors. The split between Shi'ite and Sunni Muslims led to the formation of rival nations, especially when the more practical Sunni Muslims eventually came to define "sorcery" (taboo in Islam) as different from the natural magic which Yrth provided, while the Shi'ites continued to disdain it. This does require some suspension of disbelief from any scholar of Islam, but is reasonably justified in the text -- magic on Yrth is not a mysterious force, but something that people use every day, with consistent effects... practically a science. Combined with the need to defend themselves against the Christian battle-mages of Megalos (below), some religious divergence is natural. Judaism and Paganism are common as well, though no great communities of either were brought over. The Nomad Lands (below) practice

various forms of Paganism, making them the largest nation to follow any "third-party" belief. The Jews were spread evenly throughout the lands, and have formed communities within Christian and Muslim lands alike. Their treatment ranges from respect (as "fellow followers of the Book") to outright persecution.

The Lands of Ytarria

Chapter 4, "Lands of Yrth" is the meat of Banestorm, taking up almost half the book. For those who want more detail than the map above, SJG has put up detailed maps of Yrth on their site. Every named fiefdom (or the equivalent) on the detailed nation maps has a writeup in the book; I have no room to cover each one here, of course. It's worth noting that only Ytarria is explored within, intentionally. In olden times, lands beyond the oceans were myths and rumors and "HEER BE DRAGONNES"... anything goes. Naval technology is such that it's unthinkable that anyone on Ytarria has ever seen such lands and returned.

I was very impressed with this chapter. I've come to expect a setting book to not only describe the land to me, but what to do with it. Banestorm is one of the few books to not only meet but far exceed my expectations there. Each sub-chapter describes not only the land and the important people within the land, but also the authors' intent as to what this nation represents and how it can be used. These lands were intentionally designed for gaming; each nation has a very different feel and offers significantly different adventures, though none of them feel at all contrived. Each section (heck, every page) is laden with plot-hooks and adventure opportunities, ranging from larger-than-life plots (the Caithness civil war) to opportunities for even the lowest peasant (outfoxing Wazifi slavers). I don't have to wonder what to do with this setting, only which adventure I want to run first.

Megalos

Megalos ("the great dragon") is the Roman Empire, the America, the Anglo-Sino Alliance of Yrth. The only nation worthy of the term "empire", Megalos is the mighty Christian nation, famous for its armies, battle-mages, and willingness to use both. The area of the Capital (the little dragon on the map) is famed for its sprawling cities in which world-shaking policies are made but going down the wrong alley means a quick and painful death. It is less of a threat than it used to be, however, after losing Caithness and Cardiel and failing to gain any real territory in the last several wars.

Two cities are singled out for a detailed treatment. The city of Megalos, the Imperial Capital, gets a 4-page treatment, including a box on the dark secrets of the Emperor and the plots within plots going on throughout the city. Offering a different perspective, Yibyorak is the "goblin city" -- once part of the goblin nation (until they were absorbed by Megalos), now a thriving merchant city where anything can be had for a price.

Megalos serves multiple functions. It's the perfect nation for players straight out of D&D to game in, with its emphasis on magic, its diversity of setting (from cosmopolitan cities to treacherous forests and badlands), and its understanding of less-than-ethical choices. At the same time, it serves as a great foil, the epitome of the "dark, corrupt empire, being

eaten away from within". The contrast between the large number of good, wholesome folks (especially away from the Capital) and the depravity, greed, and warmongering of the Emperor and his Vassals make for some fine gaming opportunities. Of course, things are set up perfectly for it to be both at once -- eventually, any intelligent townsman will realize all the things that are wrong with his land, and the PCs might just be the ones to set it right....

AraterreNot a nation per se, the Megalan province of Araterre was uncolonized until the 16th century when the Banestorm flared up again and imported thousands of humans, mostly from Renaissance France. Once Megalos realized this, wizards were sent to steal and suppress technology (and Protestantism, once they realized what it was), though they never did manage to eradicate the advanced naval technology that they brought with them. Araterre makes the finest ships in the world, though their remote location and the fact that only they really need them keeps it from spreading like wildfire. As one would expect from a subjugated people, many Aralaise have turned to piracy, preying off of merchant ships from other nations (and sometimes their own).

Araterre is a slice of swashbuckling action and adventure. The heat, plus the danger of falling overboard, make armor rare and thus fencing weapons king -- with no armor, better to stay light on one's feet to dodge and parry the blade, after all. The Ring Islands to the west are unexplored jungles where magic has gone a bit wild (the animals have magical abilities and wizards may find their spells going a bit wonky) and Bilit Island to the east was colonized by Mayan and Toltec natives a long, long time ago. This is a land for PCs who wish to command pirate ships, hide their treasure deep within forbidden and fantastic isles, and embarrass their Megalan oppressors by wooing the ambassador's daughter into a life of crime on the high seas.

CaithnessThe border between Caithness and Megalos is set by treaty to the point at which the magic goes away. Well, actually it just weakens significantly, meaning that mages in Caithness have to be really, really good just to get basic witchery done. (This means that when they cross over to Megalan soil, they suddenly become very scary, a fact which has helped keep Caithness an independent country.) So most problems in Caithness are solved with muscle, hard work, and Christian faith. Things are truly feudal (as opposed to Megalos' pseudo-feudal autocracy), with the King being first among equals. Unfortunately, several haughty Barons have gotten a bit uppity and started a civil war, making the land a bit less safe to travel in at times. The political alliance is well explained without being dwelled on; players who enjoy diplomacy may find themselves very useful here.

Caithness is the place for adventures in the style of King Arthur (or perhaps of the local Renaissance Fair). Knights in Caithness are not exclusively landed nobles as elsewhere (though they are the most common); the Order of St. George of the Dragon fights exclusively for the Church and the Knights of the Stone are knights without land or title, who fight

only for the honor of Caithness and the King -- unlike any other order in Yrth, even women are accepted among its ranks. Caithness is what the average gamer probably thinks of as "medieval fantasy": Knightly tourneys and duels are common, magic is a mysterious, unpredictable force -- controlled only by powerful mages who devote their lives to the craft, and dark creatures await in the foothills of the Zarak mountains, waiting to be slain for glory and honor alone.

Al-Haz The land of the stricter, Shi'ite Muslims, Al-Haz is the spiritual center of Islam on Yrth and arguably the most powerful Islamic nation. The mountains to the west of Al-Haz hide the holy city of Geb'al-Din, revealed to the Hazis by Allah himself, which has become the equivalent of Mecca to the faithful of this world. (In anything less than total war, Al-Haz has an agreement to leave its borders open to any Muslim on their required, once per lifetime pilgrimage to Geb'al-Din.) Unfortunately, a few decades ago, a plague began spreading from the holy city, likely due to the mixed germs from all of the travellers. The faithful refuse to stop coming, and magic is absolutely forbidden there, so it continues to spread. Magic is not technically illegal in Al-Haz (there are too many pragmatists who realize how weak they'd be against an invasion), but its use for anything other healing or defense of the faith is disallowed. The Balikites, an extremist anti-magic sect, cry for the death of all mages, and kill anyone suspected of being one (including the Sultan's favorite advisor; he really dislikes the Balikites now.)

Al-Haz works best as the enemy, or as a dangerous, oppressive land to sneak around in and do illegal things in. (Practically everything at all interesting is illegal there.)

Non-Muslims sneaking into Geb'al-Din is a fun, but deadly dangerous thing to do -- perfect for most PCs. The best thing that Al-Haz brings to Yrth is a sense of balance; with the more moderate Al-Wazif and the frankly secular Cardiel, a stern, honorable, faithful Islamic country helps keep things grounded.

Al-Wazif Stuck between Al-Haz, Cardiel, Megalos, and Caithness, Al-Wazif has had a harsh, war-filled history. This helped lead to their Sunni mullahs declaring the use of "non-sorcerous magic" (basically no Necromancy and no using it on other Muslims) to be in accordance with Allah's will. In fact, all mages must serve a term in the standing army; some try to "duck the draft", leading to a profitable escapee service. The current Caliph is trying to broker peace with Megalos, but is having difficulty reigning in his warlord half-brother. On top of that, the Kharijites, a "third branch" of Islam who believe that both branches are weak cowards, are constantly pressing for war. At the moment, the Wazifi-Megalan border is a cold front, though the fief of Bannock has changed sides at least six times in the past 200 years, causing the town to occasionally tear itself apart in religious strife.

Al-Wazif is expressly intended as an "Arabian Nights" setting, with magic everywhere (flying carpets, spirits in bottles, etc.), merchant caravans, and many international borders for espionage or outright warfare. Far to the west are the Pillars of Heaven,

where supplicants can speak to the wise holy men upon the great rock towers, living without comfort or companionship. Every year, the Great Games afford anyone, even an outsider, a chance for fame and fortune, and rumors abound about hidden caches of magic items, to be broken out in the event of total war. Al-Wazif can be a cinematic collection of cliches, a realistic land constantly caught in the grip of war, or something in between, as needed.

CardielOriginally Al-Kard, the third Islamic nation (mainly Sunni), it was the first to fall in the great Megalan-Islamic wars, and was rechristened Cardiel. The Christians came in and attempted to assimilate the culture, with varying success. Eventually, this turned into oppression in several areas, until the great uprising in which all but the most tolerant Christian lords were put to painful death. The country was rebuilt by the hands of those who had come to learn a lesson, and it is now a bastion of religious tolerance. Eventually, they realized they had at least as much in common with their neighbors as they did with Megalos, and declared independence, winning it in a decades-long war. Cardiel is now the most "modern" country, politically, with a loose confederation of Lords, one of whom is chosen as a Prince until he dies or steps down, who rules as first among equals. This often means much squabbling (and an amazing amount of courtly intrigue and spying) goes on before anything important can get done, which means there's always an opening for adventuring types to work as "practicals" for one of the Lords. Cardiel is about the only place on Yrth in which religious intolerance is not the norm, which will appeal to many modern players. This extends to nonhuman prejudice as well; races that would be shocking elsewhere can be found here. The Lords and other rulers are somewhat closer to ground level here as well, since no one claims absolute authority over anything greater than his fiefdom -- making it a place where even (useful) commoner PCs can interact with a Lord on somewhat of a give-and-take level. Being a coastal land, pirates and slavers are a constant issue (and sometimes a form of employment); Cardiel interacts with Araterre perhaps more than Megalos does.

Tredroy: City of Three LawsTredroy is a city, though it gets almost as much wordcount in Banestorm as a small nation, because it's just such a fun place. Look at the intersection of Al-Wazif (north), Al-Haz (west), and Cardiel (east). At that point, at the junction of the two rivers, the thrice-nationed city of Tredroy was founded. A city council exists to regulate city laws and codes across all three borders, but cross the river, and you're in another nation. The possibilities here are just endless -- this city is obviously built for fun games. I could go on, but hopefully it's clear not only that this is my favorite place in the book, but why, so I'll just leave it at that. 'Nuff said.

SahudA land far to the north where Asians and pre-Columbus Native Americans were transplanted, Sahud is an interesting and nearly incomprehensible (to an outsider) land. Ironically, not a single member of a ruling class (whether a warlord or emperor) was brought to Yrth, so they had to construct their

society from the ground up. The result is a complex bureaucracy with countless rules for "face" (a combination of honor and status, slightly different than what you're thinking of) and much redundancy to ensure stability. The nation is divided less into geographical boundaries and more into its clans, which may intermingle somewhat in location. Each clan has its preferred businesses, and they try not to overlap too badly. Society is overseen by the Heavenking, and when he dies, the clan leaders elect one of their own to replace him. The Heavenking's word is law, but in practice it has no effect if the other clan leaders choose to ignore it, so they do work together. The Heavenking's intermediaries with the rest of the world are the four vastly powerful mages known as the Eyes of Heaven, each of whom (just like the clan leaders) has their own agenda. Sahud is less of a place to start off a game in as it is a fun place to throw PCs into when things get boring. They'll be able to learn the rules, but the few weeks it takes them should be rather fun. More practically, the concept of intrigue takes on a new meaning here, with literally dozens upon dozens of factions and incredibly rigid, complex rules on diplomacy and interaction. For less cerebral approaches, Sahud is also the home of martial arts on Yrth, and cinematic styles (even wuxia if the GM permits it) are almost normal here. The "honorable ninja", a fiction in most games (and reality) is real here, which will delight some players to no end.

ZarakThe land of the dwarves, ruled by seven Kings, one of whom is the High King (but, like in Cardiel, is first among equals). Zarak doesn't get quite as full a treatment as some of the other lands, but only because of its uniformity -- dwarves tend to be rather conservative and thus similar. Each of the seven Kings and his domain receives a full writeup, here, discussing their connections to other lands and the movers and shakers in those lands. Some hate Megalos and refuse to trade with them, while others make that their lifesblood.

The OrclandsWhen Caithness (well, "Western Megalos" at the time) drove the orcs out of their land and across the Great Desert, here is where they ended up. Them, and a bunch of humans who had the luck to be dropped here, along with many centaurs and giants as well. The humans, centaurs, and giants ended up clustering up in the north end of the Orclands, leaving the larger southern portion for the namesake race. Orcs are tribal, deferring to a powerful chieftain, and love warfare. Recently, renegade dwarves, kicked out of Zarak, have been taking over the role of chieftain in a few orc tribes, galvanizing them into a dangerous weapon. Tensions are brewing....

The Nomad LandsCelts, Scandanavians, Mongols, and the like ended up here after the Banestorm. For a time, they had lost much of their land to Megalos, until they united under a hero and took their land back... then began invading Megalos. Megalos ended up building a great wall to keep them out (conceding territory as they did so), and the Nomads de-united into their villages again. (The name is misleading -- actual wandering "nomads" are rare.) Magic exists here, but is strange and unpredictable; whole villages

have been "cused" into werewolves, or stranger things, from the odd eddies of magical energy flowing through the land. These lands are perfect for the backstory of any primitive but powerful warrior, many of whom do leave their lands and journey for adventure and treasure. They're also the perfect place for Beowulf-styled adventures, where barechested spearman seek out strange creatures, whether for safety or just to trade their fur and organs with the "civilized" folk of the south.

The Southwestern WildernessThe Great Desert is (unknown to most) the site of the Banestorm spell that started this all. It used to be fertile forest, plains, and mountains. Now, it's nothing but sand, with elven ruins occasionally becoming uncovered for a few days before the sands reclaim them again. Past that are the Djinn Lands, where nomadic tribesman will trade with any rugged enough to make their way out there, but violently keep outsiders from penetrating deeper. Far within the Djinn Lands are... not exactly "djinn". A handful of elves who found a way to achieve ascension -- the casting off of material form -- exist out in the wastelands, using their power to craft small kingdoms out of the sand. Each ascended one is bound to a human body, allowing them to interact with the world more easily. It's a strange symbiosis, and not something to throw at PCs lightly -- these guys are damned powerful. A lot of wordcount is given to just what the ascended ones are and how they work, which is useful when wrapping one's head around it.

The OceansThe last section of this chapter goes into the seas and the races that live within them, including the elves' cousins, the sea elves (mutated into aquatic form by magic). The politics between the sea elves, merfolk, sharkmen, and dolphins is explored here in depth for anyone who wants to run a campaign (or just a game) under the surface. Comments on some of Yrth's smaller islands are here as well, including the "pirate havens" of the islands near the Nomad Lands and the strange islands off the coast of the Djinn Lands, where the weird creatures and interesting magics make for perfect "Sinbad" style gaming.

And More...Whew, and that last section was all one chapter! Chapter Five, "Characters", goes into useful advice for building PCs in Yrth, including guidelines for point level and a few new tweaks to Social Regard and (as usual) Talents and Unusual Background. A great deal of detail is provided for Status and cost of living, along with tech levels, and then the rest of the chapter is templates for the races (including quasi-races like lycanthropes and vampires) and for various professions. Interestingly, the chapter includes various "optional" races, which are not woven into the main text in any important way, but which could be easily dropped in if you like them: Gargoyles, Insect Men, Intelligent Animals (Eagle, Horse, Owl), and Octopus Folk. A full page is given to "Mystic Lenses", simulating the unusual powers credited to the mystics of certain religions -- three different sects are provided, each with a power structure not unlike the psi powers or powered magics of GURPS Fantasy.

Chapter Six, "Creatures", discusses what sort of animals (wild

and domestic) and monsters can be commonly found on Ytarria, and provides stats for any not found in Campaigns. Dragons get their own section, which is split between templates and a discussion of what they are, where they may have come from, and how to use them in a story. And Chapter Seven, "Campaigns on Yrth", offers thoughts on the different game styles that are especially suited to Yrth (High Fantasy, Low Fantasy, Sword and Sorcery, etc.) and then presents several campaign seeds for use, ready-made. More advice on creating a party of PCs is here as well (I'm not sure why this wasn't put into Chapter Five, which seems more appropriate, though it is good advice), along with some notes on letting players play themselves, making epic changes to the world, and a single paragraph on porting a Banestorm game into an Infinite Worlds campaign. The Verdict Okay, there's no real surprise here. I wouldn't have put this much work into writing such a detailed review if I hadn't been very impressed by this book. GURPS Banestorm is the first self-contained setting that I've read in a very long time that grabbed me by the throat and said, "You will play me." This is due as much to the hooks and advice woven throughout the book as to the setting itself -- anyone else with an old copy of GURPS Fantasy, Second Edition (1990) will see a huge difference in the Yrth of GURPS Banestorm, the authors took the extra page count and made incredible use out of it. That is not to say I don't have a complaint or two, mind you. I have a rather huge one. There is no large (two-page spread) map of Ytarria anywhere in the book. The "map of Ytarria" that you see above is actually even smaller than that in the book itself, and the only way to get a bigger version is to download the PDF. Each nation gets a detailed map, but a product like this demands a full spread map with a reasonable amount of detail within each nation. (There has been talk of SJG producing a poster-sized map of Yrth with this level of detail. I hope this comes true, because I'd definitely be willing to plunk down a few bucks for it.) I am also amazed that we didn't get even the most basic maps of the cities mentioned. Megalos and Yibyorak get nothing, and Tredroy just gets a silly little diagram showing how the rivers bisect the city. The lack of these four maps is a definite deficiency. I could consider the "missing maps" a "Style" issue or a "Substance" issue, but I'm going for Style and knocking off a whole point for it. Otherwise, the style of Banestorm is actually really nice, especially compared to GURPS Magic, which is sort of its "sister book". The artwork is not all obviously Poser-based and does a good job of evoking the various scenes and places and people mentioned in the text -- nice art direction there, I'd say. The maps themselves are also very attractive, in my opinion, and aside from the ones I mentioned, there are plenty. Each region gets a very nice, detailed map showing the locations of all of the points of interest. (Now SJG just needs to combine 'em all into one nice, big one.) That being said, the content, style, and usefulness of this book has exceeded my expectations in every way. I can't think of a single gaming

group that I've had the pleasure of being with who wouldn't enjoy some part of this world, and most would love exploring all of it. I recommend it strongly, and suggest that anyone on the fence about it check out some of the sample pieces up on the SJG website to better help you make a decision. It's definitely worth your time.

Banestorm is a great addition to the GURPS system because it is a ready to run planet. It is perfect for the busy Fantasy GM and with a little work can be adapted to a space game easily. Lots of well done maps and adventure ideas too. I will likely use the world for a Space game, the name "Ytarria" would look perfect on my subsector maps. For those looking for a premade adventure world - Banestorm fits the bill perfectly.

Yrth is great for playing Fantasy GURPS! The world is nicely detailed, and still there is a lot of freedom for GMs to develop their own Yrth. The only thing I miss in the world: the divine... (There are gods... true. But in a fantasy setting priests with very unique abilities give a flavour to the world... Especially if there are countless dieties..) I hope there is an Atlas to Yrth... One additional thing that doesn't relate to this product: my shipment was lost through the postal service, and the customer service at was so helpful (and effective), that I got the book free of charge and in 3 (!!) days (Thank you!)

Banestorm had potential to be a great addition to the GURPS system but it falls flat. It takes the WoTC route of dictating to the GM what is and is not allowed in Banestorm which to me is a carnal sin in RPG's (and why WoTC is no longer an RPG maker IMO). They've put in far too many restrictions in their effort to have a "uniform" version of the setting that it feels very anti-GURPS in spirit. It also lacks maps of any usefulness.

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