WIZARDRY:
The Proving Grounds of the Mad Overlord
A Review by Mark Marlow

HEAR YE, HEAR YE! Our Noble Lord and Most gracious ruler, Trebor the Beneficent, has need of brave men and women with stout hearts and strong constitutions to undertake the task of recovering an amulet; treacherously stolen by the evil wizard Werdna. Be ye warrior, wizard, priest or thief-human or otherwise-ye are welcome! Adventurers are invited to meet at the tavern of Gigamesh. Successful candidates will be knighted and hired into the king's service. Please leave name and address of next of kin at the Adventurer's Inn. (We need to know who to bill in case of accidental death or dismemberment!)

Such might be the bulletin posted in a medieval town in some epic fantasy tale. **WIZARDRY:** *The Proving Grounds of the Mad Overlord* is a game of epic proportions comprising nearly 14,000 lines of code on both sides of a diskette. The brainchild of Andrew Greenberg and Robert Woodhead, WIZARDRY is the culmination of nearly 2½ man-years of intensive effort. The original WIZARDRY program was written in Basic which proved too slow to make the game a viable product. The game was rewritten in Pascal but was delayed until the release of a runtime system which would allow the game to be played on Apples without language systems. The final result is a game which is superbly playable but with enough variation and complexity to whet the appetite of the most discriminating adventurer.

THE WORLD OF WIZARDRY

WIZARDRY is a fantasy role-playing game modeled on the Dungeons and Dragons game concept with the computer assuming the role of the Dungeon Master. The world of "The Proving Grounds of the Mad Overload" consists of a castle, an inn, a tavern, a trading post, a temple, the training grounds, and a three-dimensional maze, ten levels deep, below the castle.

The training grounds located at the edge of town, are the first of several stops you must make. Here, you enter a name and/or password for your character. You are then given a choice of races. Wizardry characters may be humans, dwarves, elves, gnomes or hobbits. At this point you are asked to choose the character's alignment. A caution here, only characters of similar alignment can travel together. For example, neutral characters may travel with either good or evil alignment groups, but good and evil may never mix. The

computer then generates a random number of points which you may add to the character's basic attributes. The six attributes are *Strength, I.Q., Piety, Vitality, Agility,* and *Luck.*

Based on the character type you pick and the points you assign, you may choose one of the classes which appear on the screen. Beginning players will usually be allowed to pick *fighters, mages, priests,* and *thieves.* As the characters gain experience, you will have the option of changing the class of your character to an elite class. The elite characters are *bishops, lords, samurai,* and *ninja.*

However, there are drawbacks to changing the class of your character. The first and foremost drawback is that your character loses all of his experience points. The second is that your character will age. Attributes tend to decline after age 50 and the effectiveness of spells, etc., will decrease in direct proportion to the decline in attributes.

Now that the characters are created, the next stop is Gigamesh's Tavern. Parties are assembled here before entering the maze. After the party is assembled, a trip to Boltac's Trading Post is in order. There is a wide selection of weapons, armor, and magic spells. Boltac has been known to run out of items so don't rely on Boltac's for all of your equipment. Some very powerful items can be found by opening chests in the maze. Any items you cannot use can be sold back to Boltac at half the retail price.
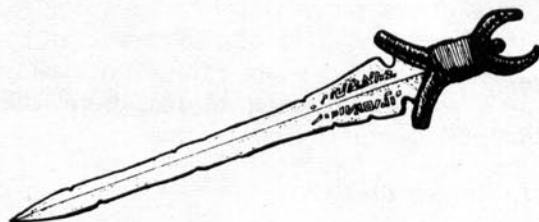
ENTERING THE MAZE

Anytime you enter the maze, you will automatically be in camp. The first time you enter you should EQUIP the entire party. As you do this, the armor class of each player who has purchased armor drops considerably. The lower the number, the stronger is his armor. When you leave camp, the maze appears in 3-dimensional aspect in the upper left corner of your screen. Movement is generated using either "R" and "L" for right and left, "F" for forward or the "A", "W", "D" group for left, forward, and right respectively. When you come to a door, you must use the "K" command to kick in the door. Some rather nasty surprises are usually waiting for you on the other side.

MAGIC SPELLS

Probably the single most fascinating aspect of Wizardry is the ability of priests, mages, bishops lords, and samurai to cast spells. Wizardry comes with a book of some fifty spells which the magic users can cast by uttering a magic word. Arcane sounding words such as MILWA and LOMILWA can shed light in certain situations. The spells cannot all be used at the outset. As in real life, the

ability to use certain things must be gained through experience. Therefore, in order to be able to cast the higher level spells, your character must gain enough levels to learn these spells. Another nice little item worth remembering is that you only have a certain number of spell points. Once these are exhausted you must leave the dungeon and rest up before the points are renewed.

Certain items in the dungeon also have magical qualities. Bishops have the ability to identify these items, it is, therefore, a good idea to bring one along in the early stages of the game. If you don't bring a bishop, you will have to pay exorbitant rates at Boltac's to get the items identified. You could always take a chance and equip your charcter with the items you find, but if the item is cursed, your characters performance in battle could be adversely affected.

MAPPING THE MAZE

Each level of the dungeon is a grid measuring approximately 20 by 20. Mapping is essential to survival in the game. Being trapped on an unknown level and getting the entire party slaughtered because you didn't know the way to the stairs has caused many a nightmare for unsuspecting adventurers. The stairs leading to the castle are located at co-ordinate 0,0. The casting of a *DUMAPIC* spell will tell you your exact location with respect to the stairs to the castle. By using *DUMAPIC* in conjunction with *MALOR*, the teleportation spell, you can pretty much travel all over the maze with relative safety. Just remember that the stairs are one level below the castle, so that if *DUMAPIC* tells you that you are 13 steps east, 10 steps north, and 7 levels down; you must go 13 west, 10 south, and 6 up to arrive at the stairs.

Wizardry is an extremely complex game and one of the most challenging tasks is to complete an accurate map of all ten levels. There are many tricks programmed in to make mapping difficult. I would appreciate receiving copies of maps from any readers who have mapped all ten levels and compare them to the ones I have made. If I can compile what I believe to be an accurate and complete representation of all ten levels, and the public response is favorable, then the maps may be published in this magazine. Also, if you have a list of magic items and their uses, I would like to

compile a guide to the objects you can find in the maze.

GRAPHICS

If you are looking for a game with extensive graphics and sophisticated animation, then Wizardry might disappoint you. The graphics appear in the same small square that depicts the 3-D maze. The monsters appear in the corner and a description of the monster group(s) appears at the top of the screen. Several things can occur during an encounter. You could surprise the monsters and have one round of unanswered combat. If the monsters surprise you, then they get one round of unanswered combat. If you both run into each other at the same time, the computer will randomly pick who gets to fight first, though high agility or luck could swing things in your favor.

Encounters are fought in turns: you determine what each character in your band is going to do, then the computer gives you the result in rapid sequence. The display speed can be adjusted from 1 to 5000 which translates to anywhere from a fraction of a second to five seconds.

UTILITY OPTIONS

The boot side of the Wizardry diskette has a number of important utility options. If you are playing the game and accidentally hit reset, you may use the RE)COVER option to save the characters who are in the maze. In older versions, this would cause the characters to age 10 years, but the newer versions have removed this penalty.

The M)AKE SCENARIO option allows you to create an unlimited number of back up scenarios. This option enables you to use the copy you create to play the game, saving wear and tear on the original. The option does require two disk drives.

The B)ACKUP CHARACTERS option allows you to save your characters onto a DOS 3.3 initialized disk in case you should crash the program and inadvertently wipe out your characters. You can recover from the back up directly onto the scenario from which you made the back up.

Another option allows you to change the names of characters. This is useful when you transfer characters between scenarios and find that you have two characters with the same name.

The T)RANSFER option allows you to transfer characters between Wizardry scenarios, though it deletes the character from the source scenario before writing it to the new scenario.

Finally, there is the U)PDATE option, which allows you to update a friend's Wizardry disk if it is an older version.

TIPS ON STRATEGY

The biggest mistake you can make in Wizardry is to attempt too much too soon. Patience is definitely a virtue. The first few forays into the maze should be hit and run type maneuvers. Fight one encounter, then get the heck out of the maze. Use your healing spells often. The strongest initial group consists of three fighters, two priests, and a mage. Later, you should include a thief (great for disarming trapped chests) and possibly a bishop to identify objects. A level 12 or higher bishop can identify most objects fairly quickly.

Don't attempt going down to the third or fourth levels until your characters are level 10 or higher. Hit points can be lost quickly so use your priests to heal during combat. Later, when your characters have found and defeated Werdna, you can find ways to build up characters rapidly.

1) Finding the entrance to the 10th level.
(UIFSF JT B DIVUF MPDBUFE BU 9F,30,9E)

2) Fighting greater demons.
(VTJOH MBLBOJUP XJMM VTVBMMZ TNPUIFS BCPVU IBMG PG UIFN)

3) Finding the gold key.
(UIF HPME LFZ JT MPDBUFE PO UIF TFDPOE MFWFM JO B EBSL BSFB)

4) Getting back into the castle after defeating Werdna.
(JG ZPV BSF JO XFSEOB'T MBJS, DBNQ JNNFEJBUFMZ, DBTU NBMPS BOE VTF UIFTF DPPSEJOBUFT: 28X, 4T, 10V)

CONCLUSIONS

Wizardry is complex, but even with its complexity, is an extremely playable game. It is highly interactive to the point that you could easily become emotionally attached to the characters you've created. I've talked to many players who have become Wizardry addicts to the point that they play the game eight to ten hours a day.

I personally could find little to fault with Wizardry. The biggest fault I could find in the mechanics of the game was that it was too easy to get killed at first. This is very frustrating for a first time player. Even experienced characters could be killed off relatively easily if surprised by a group of spell casters.

Another thing which would enhance the game would be the addition of more puzzles to solve. While the main quest is a difficult one to solve, smaller and more cryptic puzzles would greatly add to the overall effect.

In conclusion, I would rate Wizardry as one of the all time classic computer games. It sets the standard by which all fantasy role playing games should be compared. In the years to come, if there ever is a Gaming Hall of Fame, Wizardry receives my vote as the first entry into its hallowed halls.