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Exalted Scroll Of Kings (Exalted: Second Edition)



Synopsis

A guide to warfare in the Exalted Setting

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Scroll of Kings is a collection of rules, etc., centered around the theme of armies and warfare. Within are clarifications to the mass combat system, stats for siege weaponry, info on the military practices and sample units from a variety of nations (including several not previously covered), and other stuff of that nature. There is also info on the major directional gods of war, their worship and agendas. The one potentially confusing thing is the overall organization. The book is arranged by direction, such that the rules for sieges are in the section on the South, whereas naval combat is in the chapter on the West. It makes thematic sense, but it means you have to have a good sense of the themes involved (or have read the whole book already) if you want to just look up a particular thing. Of course, the whole thing isn't that long, so it's not a big problem. Also, most things with stats are at the end in the appendices, so that while naval combat is discussed in the West chapter, the actual ship stats are in the back. On the whole, it's a nice addition to the series that will come in handy for players interested in making use of the War Ability, or for Storytellers of a series set during wartime. The additions and clarifications within are useful and welcome in that case but not essential for those less interested in games focusing on this particular theme.

The Mass Combat rules for Exalted need quite a lot of work. They're clumsy to work with and some of the mechanics are simply poorly thought out (e.g., the way Morale scales for larger armies

provides for ridiculous results in which a very small force of mortals can, without much trouble, rout most of a 10,000 man strong enemy force of mortals. No Exalted or heroic mortals need be involved). I'm running a campaign in which an important battle is coming up, and so I bought this book assuming that it would feature a better and streamlined ruleset that would save me a lot of time and provide for a better play experience. Unfortunately, the book doesn't deliver. It outlines a lot of flavor for military forces in the different regions of Creation, including a few stat blocks for different kinds of troops. It also features some mildly useful information for ships and other military equipment, such as siege engines and cannons. These details are useful, to be sure. But what use is this level of detail when the system itself won't work without extensive house-ruling? I own most of the Exalted 2nd Ed books, and this is the only one which I regret purchasing. You can obtain a great deal of the flavor from the relevant Compass of Terrestrial Directions books, and statting out armies and units isn't that hard. The main contribution this book should have made was improving the core system of Mass Combat, and that is exactly what it doesn't do in any shape or way. With so many other excellent Exalted supplements, I suggest you pass on this one.

Table of contents
Introduction 4
Chapter one fire and iron 7
Chapter two blood in the water 34
Chapter three general winter 58
Chapter four seeds of conflict 80
Chapter five the failing center 105
Chapter six panoply of war 129

Those familiar with White Wolf products (especially the Exalted line) will note the substantial editing problems. Only the most grammar conscious or irritable would claim that these really detract from the quality of the product, I feel, but then again I have been acclimated to this sort of shoddy editing by years of it. Scroll of Kings is a solid book, containing a great deal of setting information necessary for running campaigns dealing with military campaigns and the like. Each of the first five chapters covers one direction (South, North, West, East, Central) and introduces rules and mechanics that pertain to the conditions most common in that direction. The armies of major nations and cities in each direction are also given a thorough treatment, complete with Mass Combat statistics for one unit per locale. All in all, this material is very sound and satisfying and makes an enjoyable read. I was especially fond of the discussion of each direction's war gods, their rites, rituals and dispositions. History buffs will be alternately entertained or frustrated, depending on how picky they are about "realistic tactics and equipment," but the relevance of such a discussion within a fantasy line is a perennial argument that will not disappear anytime soon. With regards to the treatment of Exalted canon, your mileage may vary. An example: The presence of projectile firing shore and

deck cannons in the old Savage Seas supplement always nudged me the wrong way (since it contradicted most explanations for why Firedust was not gunpowder and could not be used the same way) and now that has been somewhat retconned with the introduction of steam cannons. The same principles apply ... one need only use the firedust to vaporize water in a boiler and then the steam does the work of pushing the stone or shell. While I like steam-cannons in my setting, others have expressed their distaste. The individual preferences of each reader ought to be considered. The last thing that bears mentioning is the degree to which various rules and mechanics are scattered throughout the chapters. I enjoyed this organization, but I also understand the outrage and frustration of others who find it messy and irresponsible. I am well satisfied with it and eagerly anticipate the next supplements in the line.

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