GRÉGORY

This discussion with Manu is really rich. In my own actual *Sorcerer & Sword* game, it's very clear that the backdrop is generated from the situation. Let me see if I understand well.

One of the characters is unlucky in love, and his lover is a golden priestess of an undefined cult. Its kicker defined the starting situation, with her lover being sick from an unkown and painful wickness (a curse, designed with the demon rules), and witch-hunter tracking him because of its weirdness (he has "the chill" as a price).

After the first session, the priestess was killed by the witch-hunter, one of them had fled, and it was clear to me that he fled to the Temple of the priestess. And the player chose to track this guy.

So now I felt that we needed to have a clearer understanding of what this temple were, this religion were, and what was happening there. I wrote a simplified cult writeup inspired from Cults of Prax (very simplified, because in S&S things are generally simple!), draw a map, thought about what kind of NPC would be there in broad term (the Temple, Temple guards, a place for trade and host visitors around, a council of priestess), giving a little more detail to one of them (hey, there is this one priestess who's name is xxx and her social/cult position is now affected by the previous priestess's death - she benefits from this death).

So, the new situation here (Power relations affected in the Cult) is determined by the previous situation (death of the priestess), and the backdrop I'm developing (the temple write-up) satisfies the needs from this new situation.

RON

Yes. *Sorcerer & Sword* is, to my knowledge, the first explicit publication in role-playing to say that setting is built through play, as a known feature. This viewpoint is evident in a lot of very early role-playing material and approaches but always treated as a flaw to be repaired, or a design gap to be replaced by a GM's efforts, or a promise to be filled by later publications. The notion that setting was fixed and objective in some way, whether now or later, was sacred even when everything about the game and presentation displayed the opposite and even provided tools to do it the way Sorcerer & Sword explicitly does. By the mid-80s, the illusion or delusion was complete and could not even be mentioned, and the game materials to do it fell away entirely by 1990 or so.