

The Discovery of Cathay

tilea

South of the Empire and Bretonia lies the land of Tilea. Cut-throats and sell-swords to a man, Tileans often offer their services as mercenaries when no wars are waged in their own country. For in this land each city is a separate principality in unfettered rivalry with its neighbours. Every merchant prince looks to himself and his own wealth and seeks only to stab and poison his neighbours, while extending the hand of friendship. Despite this, the Tileans are cultured people, expert in all arts and master seafarers. Their explorers have discovered many lands.

Every year, expeditions large and small set off for the fabled lands of Lustria and Cathay, seeking new trade routes or simply off to plunder. This makes Tilea a magnet for every scoundrel with a lust for gold and an eye for adventure. It is the heroes' starting point in countless tales of daring exploits, brave rescues, and impossible deeds – and some stories are true!



the silk road

The ancient Dwarf road leading from Tilea into the Worlds Edge Mountains and the old Dwarf strongholds had long been known to Tilean merchants. Usually it was Dwarf traders who used this road to reach the cities of Tilea and the coast, where they could exchange metals and gems for Elf gold, pearls, exotic timber and other luxuries brought in on ships from Ulthuan. Of course some enterprising Tilean merchants followed the road back to the Dwarf Kingdom where they tried to introduce the Dwarfs to such luxuries as wine, perfume and soap, but without much success!

As to what lay beyond the Dwarf Kingdoms to the east little was known. The Dwarfs just tugged their beards, shook their heads and advised the Tileans not to go there. Beyond the mountains, they said, there was just a barren wilderness inhabited by Goblins and bad Dwarfs. Those who went barely two day's journey into the east found this to be true.

Then one day, the brothers, Ricco and Robbio, Tilean merchants in Karaz-a-Karak, bought a tattered but exceptionally fine silk banner from some Dwarf adventurers who had been far to the east. They claimed to have captured it from a band of Hobgoblins. The banner bore the symbol of a Dragon, and the Dwarfs, not bothered about keeping what they believed to be an Elf banner, were eager to sell it for gold.

The significance of the banner was not lost on Ricco and Robbio. If it was an Elf banner captured by the Hobgoblins, it could be the answer to a question which had been vexing the minds of many Tilean merchants: was it possible to get to Ulthuan by going eastwards as an overland route instead of sailing westwards over the sea? If such a thing was possible, it could mean that Ulthuan was at the eastern end of the great Old World continent! It would also mean that the world was round and not flat as most people believed.



Elf seafarers had never revealed much about Ulthuan. The Norse seemed to think it was an island. Marco Colombo in his writings speculated as to whether it was an island or a peninsula of a great northern continent attached to Lustria. He believed, as did many others, that only this could explain where the Dwarf Elves came from and why they fought against the High Elves.

Ricco and Robbio suspected that if they journeyed far enough to the east they would either arrive in Ulthuan, or maybe even Lustria, or on the far coast of the Old World continent opposite Ulthuan. Unfortunately this coast might be held by Dark Elves whom it was generally agreed were undesirable trading partners. The fine workmanship of the silk banner and its Dragon motif suggested a High Elf origin. Perhaps it had been lost in battle with the Dark Elves and captured by Hobgoblin lackeys in their employ?





Ricco and Robbio scoured the Dwarf strongholds of the Worlds Edge Mountains seeking more artefacts of Elven workmanship which had come out of the east. They aquired a small hoard of objects including scrolls bearing what appeared to be Elven writing, weapons, and silks which Dwarf traders were pleased to sell for gold.

The two brothers returned to their home city of Verezzo and tried to raise funds for an expedition into the east. Their intention was to find an overland route to Ulthuan and possibly even Lustria. This would avoid the hazards of along sea voyage and show the High Elves that they might rule the seas but not the land. Also it would enable Verezzo to get one up on her trading rivals in Remas, which was enjoying a monopoly on the western sea trade at this time.

The Prince of Verezzo was very enthusiastic and all the Merchant Princes of the city followed his example. Merchants from Luccini, Miragliano, and Pavona also contributed to the enterprise. It was decided that the expedition was so dangerous that only a powerful armed force could be expected to fight its way across the continent. Therefore a great mercenary army was gathered, led by the best mercenary commanders of the day. Furthermore, there was a large civilian contingent of merchants, artisans, craftsmen and others, together with their wives and camp followers. The baggage train stretched for over a mile.

The intention was to set up a trading post as far east as possible. As the expedition passed through the lands of the Border Princes it gathered further contingents motivated by a sense of adventure. When it reached the Dwarf Kingdom, several Dwarf contingents joined the column, notably Troll Slayers, attracted by the generally held belief that the expedition was doomed! In 1699 the expedition, now numbering over a thousand Tileans and various other mercenaries, left Karaz-a-Karak for the east, travelling up the Worlds Edge Mountains to the Road of Skulls and beyond!

It was many years before anyone in Tilea heard of the fate of the expedition or what they discovered. Then in 1714 a merchant caravan of pack yaks arrived at Verezzo, laden down with bundles of silk. With the bales of silk came a message from Ricco and Robbio explaining that they were now residing in the westernmost outpost of the Empire of Cathay! Of course, up to then no one in Tilea, or for that matter the Old World, had known that Cathay existed at all.

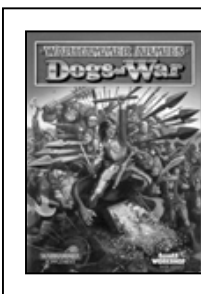
It was now clear that there was no eastern route to Ulthuan or Lustria. The world was indeed flat and much much larger than anyone could have imagined. Instead of Elves, the Tileans had encounters an entirely unknown realm. Indeed it was a populous empire of vast extend and unimaginable wealth.

Apparently Ricco and Robbio had not been permitted to enter the Empire of Cathay because, as the Cathayans has politely explained, they were hairy and uncouth barbarians! However, the Emperor Wu, greatest of all the Cathayan Emperors, had been intrigued by these strangers. He had been delighted with the return of the banner of his Palace Guard and was gratified to receive the submission and tribute of the entire land of Tilea!

This caused great mirth in Verezzo where they guessed that the cunning Ricco and Robbio had appealed to the vanity of this oriental potentate in order to avoid being summarily beheaded! The message went on to say that the Emperor had agreed to hire the entire expedition having been impressed by a mock battle in which the mercenaries had held off a small part of the Cathayan army. The Tileans accompanying the pack yaks explained that it had not been a 'mock' battle and the army, although small by Cathayan standards had in fact outnumbered the Tilean by about three to one!

Since that time a mercantile quarter has flourished in Shang-Yang which is the westernmost of the Cathayan fortress towns on the 'Silk Road'. This is the name by which the trade route to Cathay, opened up by Ricco and Robbio has become known. Trading caravans go along this route very rarely and only a few reach their destination due to the terrible hazards of the journey and the scourge of the Hobgobla Khan and his great horde which, when all his loyal tribes are drawn up for battle, is said to extend from horizon to horizon!

The mercenaries in Shang-Yang have become 'guests' of the Emperor of Cathay and valued warriors in his service. The Emperor uses these troops to help defend his western frontier against the wrath of Hobgobla Khan. Of course by



"The Silk Road" was first published in the Warhammer army book "Dogs of War" (1998) on pages 94-95.



Miniatures of the far East

Welcome to the first month of *Border Town Burning* previews! The supplement is scheduled for a summer release and until then starting this month Christian Templin will take the chance to elaborate on this mammoth project in a few issues of the *Letters of the Damned*. This time he describes some of the miniatures and conversions the BTB groups are using for the various warbands, monsters and other inhabitants of the Cathayan borderlands and Northern Wastes.



The key to maximizing your tabletop experience is having awesome miniatures that you feel comfortable with when shoving them across the board. In our hobby there is nothing like the feeling you get from putting the finishing touches on your painted models, then leaning back and looking at them with self-satisfaction.

On the following pages I will present the models we are using for our Border Town Burning games. I hope you enjoy the show and feel inspired to come up with your own conversions. Note that we are using Games Workshop products only i.e. Citadel miniatures. This is a personal choice perhaps making things more difficult. But 'difficult' is another word for 'challenging'.



Marauders of Chaos

Any warband can be personalized. None so much as the Marauders of Chaos list published in *Letters of the Damned* issue 2. There are many options available, from various Chaos gods to Chaos tribes and different play-styles, by focusing on mass with Warhounds or horses or henchmen. The warband presented on these pages consists of rather average models with a slight Tchar influence (Tchar is Tzeentch in the marauder culture for the unsophisticated peasants amongst thou).

Above: This **Condemned** conversion uses the head of the Warhammer 40k Daemon Prince to give the model an impressive daemonic look. The head is so huge that a swollen throat had to be modelled with Green Stuff.

Below: This **Marauder Chieftain** is made of Archaon's mighty upper body. The head, legs and left arm are purposely common bits from the marauder sprue to tie the model with the other marauders of the warband. After all he is not a worthy Chaos warrior – yet!



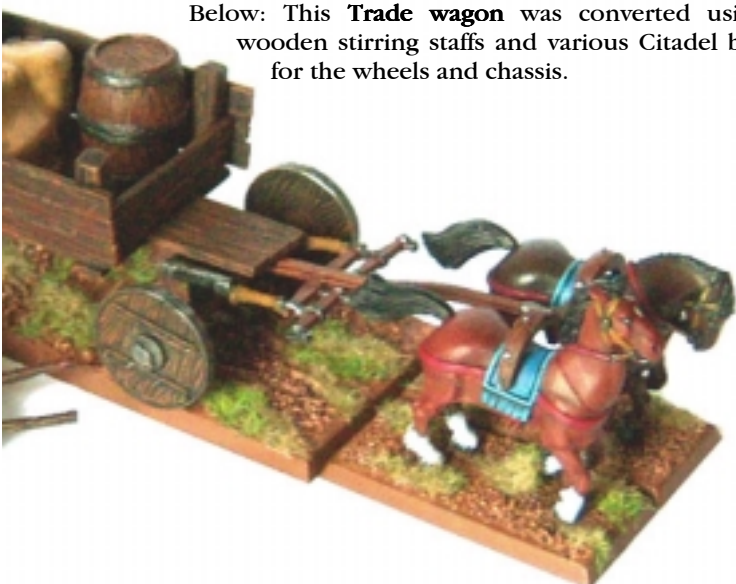


Above: This Tchar **Shaman** is made from a normal marauder who got fur cloth modelled with Green Stuff. The double-headed eagle on his arm is another Warhammer 40k bit and makes for a great familiar.

Merchant Caravans

The merchant and his caravan were the first glimpse of Cathayan culture and Cathayan rules in the supplement. The warband is centred round a merchant travelling the Silk Road to the Cathayan borderlands in hope of making a fortune by trading Cathayan silks and other rare items from the mystic lands of the east. This merchant has the funds to hire the best sell-swords available for gold. Back in the Old World he will hire famed Tilean marksmen and pikeneers. In Cathay he will hire Cathayan soldiers and – if he is lucky enough – even one or two fallen Cathayan knights, though it is not unlikely that Imperial or even Bretonnian knights will join the caravan. His retinue has to protect the merchant and his trade cart, which being filled with all manner of rare goods attracts marauders, beastmen and other bandits who dwell around the borderlands.

Below: This **Trade wagon** was converted using wooden stirring staffs and various Citadel bits for the wheels and chassis.



The traditional units are not difficult to get hold of. I use the Marksmen models from my Reiklander warband (that I have never played since, by the way). The pikeneers are from the Warhammer Dogs of War regiment.

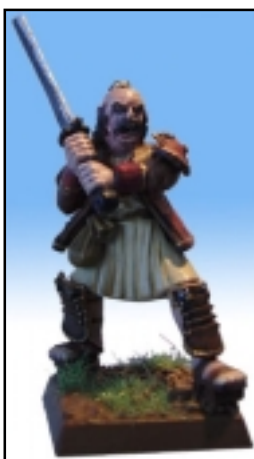


For the Merchant model I use Empire cannon crew members. There are many Empire models available that fit the role perfectly and the eventual decision is based on personal preference solely.



For the Cathayan Blackguards some heads were needed that have a Cathayan flavour and I opted for the Kislev archers and the Mordheim Kislev Bear Tamer.

Far more challenging were the conversions for the Knights Vanguard – an elite Hero type for the caravan. Again I used Kislev Archer heads to provide the appropriate Cathayan appearance. The rest of the body is made from Empire Militia and state troops bits.



Left: A **Knights Vanguard** which is also used as **Officer** in the Battle Monks warband.

Below: Three Cathayan **Blackguards**.



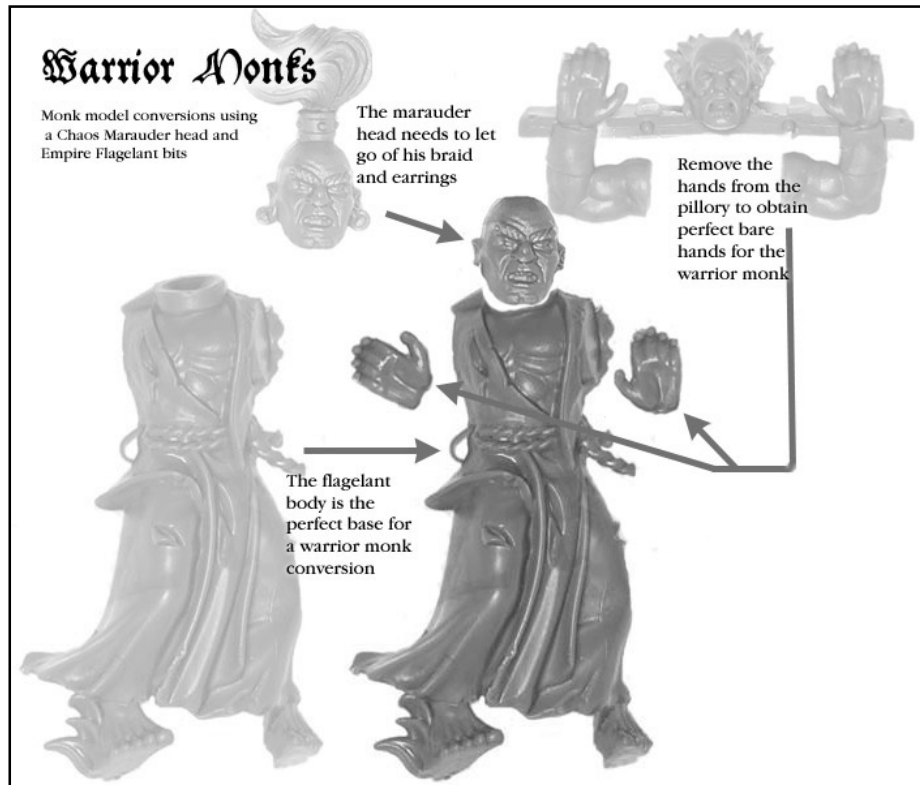
Battle Monks of Cathay

Now things are getting really interesting! This warband requires a lot of Cathayan-looking models. There are Warrior Monks, Cathayan townsfolk and a Cathayan Emissary who leads the warband.

I've been searching the Citadel range for appropriate models to represent my battle monks for quite some time. The only somewhat suitable models I found were some Warhammer 40k priests with robes. They had a monkish look but not that of an Asian warrior. I chose to go with the very cool Ninja Assassins from the 80s. As soon as I had bought enough of them to field an entire regiment into the battle, GW released the new Warhammer Flagellant models for the Empire. I was blown away when I saw them. Someone at the local GW store showed me the sprues and I was immediately convinced that they were the perfect models to make some warrior monk conversions.

I made two different types of battle monks: the first is the common bald-headed warrior monk henchman. I used a specific head from the Chaos marauder sprues I still had lying around, cut off his braid and earrings and – ta'dah! – done! The flagellant box is so great it even includes some open hands (from the pillory bit). This kind of hand is quite difficult to find in Warhammer sprues because everyone is wielding weapons these days. The other type of battle monk is the Dragon Monk hero. These guys are great martial artists and as such not only better trained but also much older. Suitable heads for them are already in the flagellant box. For my second Dragon Monk I chose to steal a conversion idea from Dave Tylor. He used the Mordheim Elf Mage hired sword model for a Cathayan mage in his stunning Grand Army of Cathay (WD 314).

You can see pictures of the battle monks warband overleaf.



Other miniatures

The Border Town Burning setting makes great use of more unusual miniatures than those from the aforementioned warbands. For example the random happenings might cause a group of animated terra cotta soldiers to appear on the table.

There is a crazy hired sword called 'Cathayan Pyromaniac'. This is an insane sage with knowledge of blackpowder and fireworks. Unleashing this dude on the battle field is a danger not only for the opponent. This crazed model is perfectly represented by some very old miniatures of the Nippon rocket crew, which could be found in the Warhammer 3rd edition hardback rulebook published in 1987.

Below: The Nippon Rocket Crew with the suitable **Cathayan Pyromaniac** model inside.





Above: The Battle Monks conversions before painting.



Right: Two **Dragon Monks** and two **Warrior Monk** henchmen ready to fight off the Chaotic threat.

Below: The Heroes of the Battle Monk warband.





Above: A **Cathayan Emissary** leads a mob of **Raging Peasants** into the battle. The Peasants are made from old Citadel models such as the Nippon rocket crew and the Oriental Heroes range.



Above right: The dramatis personae **Ippan Shu** prowling in the Cathayan borderlands. Like the Dragon Monk conversion this model is made entirely from the Empire flagellant sprue. His flying pose gives him additional Eastern movie flavour.



Right: These beautifully painted old Citadel Ninja Assassins by Stu Cresswell represent the **Warrior Monks** in his warband.

Below: This **Battle Monks warband** takes a Cathayan Pyromaniac into the battle with them. The crazed firestarter's rockets may prove as a danger for not only the enemy.



More pictures of warbands and other models will be shown in the gallery section of the supplement.

You can also see some more pictures on the Border Town Burning website:

www.bordertownburning.de.vu

