Cãlin Dan
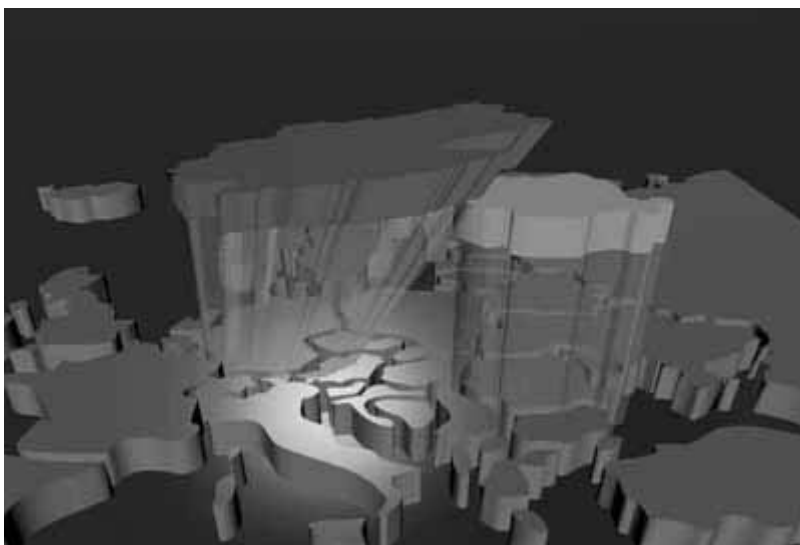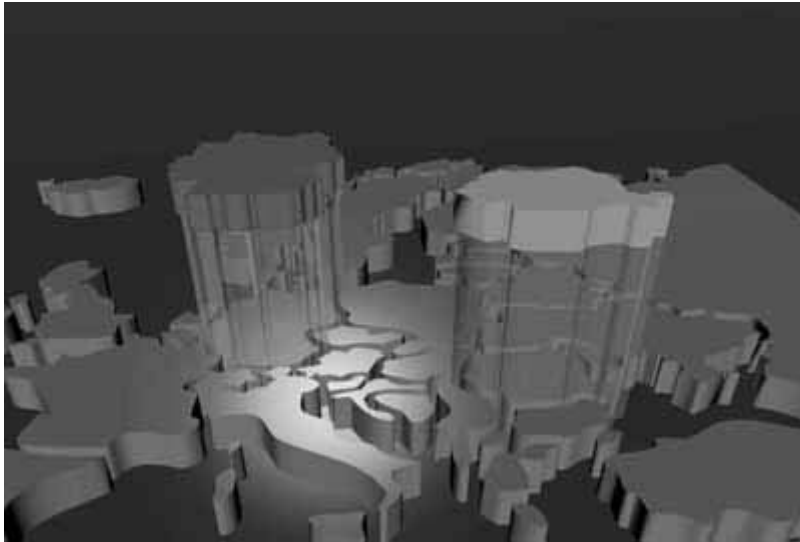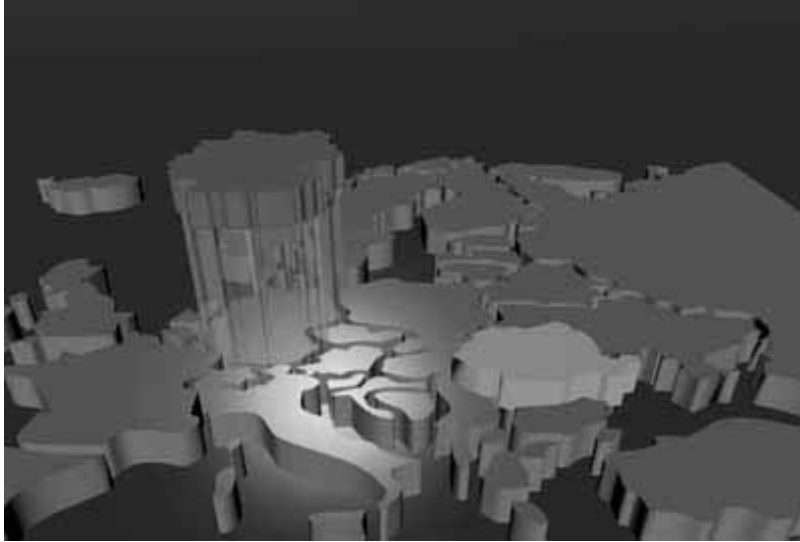**Happy Doomsday!**

Origins

According to the archives of Kronstadt/Brásso (presently Brasov, Romania), my maternal ancestors can be traced back to the 14th century, when the first Kersz(t) (presently Cristea) were given permission to work as millers on the domain of Cseithe (Cetea), belonging to the Bathory estate. If I am to believe the toponymic research pursued by the Royal Institute of Science, Budapest (see Szombathy Miklós, coordinator: Sur les Origines des Communautés Hongroises en Transylvanie, Budapest 1923, pp. 345—346), "cseithe" is an old Khazar term for "saddle".

An interesting coincidence is mentioned by Nicolae Cartojan, member of the Romanian Academy, who considers the name Cristea originating not in Christ (Christós), but in the same Kersz, first mentioned in the chronicle of King Bela as a rebel Khazar chieftain. (see Kazari si Cumani. Surse patronimice in afara latinitatii, Editura Academiei, 1936, p. 79)

The Khazars came from Asia in the 10th century. When King Bela offered privileges to the tribes of the Carpathian marches in exchange for protection against Tartars, the Khazars refused the deal and moved towards the plains. At about the same time they embraced Judaism. The Khazars are known as the only Mosaic communities from modern Europe to live from farming, and the only nomads to keep a strong commitment to their past on a non-violent basis. The economic and cultural bonds between the Tartars of the Golden Horde and the Khazar communities are the exception in a history otherwise straightforwardly violent. It is also believed that the few positive ambiguities in the politics of the Ottoman Turks (as regards confessional tolerance and economic realism) come from the Khazar lesson about dissident nomadism.

The Khazars were integrated into Europe at a very early stage, before the time when my supposed ancestors started to work as millers. But I like to believe that their first perception of our continent is preserved to a certain extent. For the Khazars Europe was a good place, but also a place where it is good to be both in and out. They didn't need to learn their ambiguities here, but the trip certainly improved their knowledge of paradoxes. To travelers and colonists of old times, Europe looked exotic.

"Here violence is a denied obsession, rationality a praised failing, tolerance an instrument of convenience, culture a commodity, loyalty a trade, community a threat, citizenry a deception. And under all of it stays the orgasm of war."

When old cultures sometimes behave unexpectedly violently, nomads can give some sense to a sedentary way of life.

A few wars

The present (From "The War of the Nano Countries")

Sir,

The Institute for the Rating of Neural Activity (IRNA — Brighton, UK) has established for the past 12 months a pattern of increased aggressive behavior in groups of populations defined through specific shared fantasies:
— identity is individual sacrifice,
— survival is territorial isolation,
— economy is self-sufficiency.

Those fantasies are put to work both by direct violence and media exploitation. The syndrome, classified as the ethno wave (EW), developed institutional & territorial claims in as many as 45 regions and areas (see list in Annex 1), varying in size from a few m2 to a max. of 2530 km2.

Strategic advice: Implementation of the Nano Country Solution

Tactical steps:

1. Annexation of Albania as a base for test & production, considering the following factors.
— Good resources — the Silicon belt recently discovered in the region of Vlore.
— Good infrastructure — the network of bunkers built during the Hoxa regime.
— Good working morale — on the grounds of combining force with retribution.
Similarities with the Korean chaebol procedures can be established (possible use of virgin female teenagers).

2. Gathering of case studies from the 45 regions affected by EW.

3. Experimentation of the nano-countries according to area priorities. Suggested order in Annex 2.

4. According to results, launching of market operations.

NOTE: The large-scale implementation of the nano-countries might be a potential source of conflict. Therefore, preparation campaigns have to be foreseen. They should combine paralegal stimulation of needs with apolitical activities (NGOs, monitoring committees, think-tank specialists) meant to provide confidence in the product.

The past (From "The Tin Tanks War")

In early May 1104, the crusaders won a battle at Harran, on the River Balikh. The victory came late in the evening, so the two armies camped afterwards in front of each other. But as the night wore on, the Normans became increasingly uneasy, and the fear of death crept over them. The first groups of defectors were driven back by the sentinels, but their numbers grew and a panic flight began. When the Moslems woke up, they saw in amazement that the camp of the unfaithful was deserted and recognized the power of an unpredictable ally — fear.

The future (From another war)

The first wireless connections were made available to the horse people in 1997. Some 750 years after their last tour of the Eurasian plains, the nomadic pools received inviting signals from the same directions. Every household had 21 inch shamanistic mirrors where the spirits were talking about weather forecasts, stock rates, cattle breeding and more. The yourts were now connected to an endless network of light paths. The mice were dancing happily in the hands of the Drummers, showing where the next campaign should hit. The Internet was far better than cavalry, because the logistics were easier (feeding a 20 V battery compared to feeding millions of war horses). The slash & burn method that the Mongol hackers mastered so fast was the best way of stimulating and simultaneously controlling the Net. This war lasted 45 years.

Now and then. (From "The War of the Broken Leg")

Excellency,

Alexandru Ipsilanty, Vel Dragoman (Great Translator) and ambassador of the Ottoman court, broke his leg while visiting the University of Uppsala in his dual role of politician and scholar.

Regretfully I have to inform you that the Dragoman has great influence over His Enlightened Highness the Sultan, and his determination is well known.

At this very moment the Grand Vizier (Prime Minister) is conferring with the British Ambassador, Sir Waldon Churchill, about the possibility of a blockade in the Sound by H.M.S. "Blood" and "Slippery".

It is also known that the Vel Dragoman aims to become Voievod (Ruler) of Wallachia, also that this function can be purchased for the current price of 20.000 Florins. Therefore Your Excellency must decide what the broken leg of Dragoman Ipsilanty is worth: a military campaign against England, of which no one knows the outcome, or a negotiable sum which will most certainly end in the vast pockets of the Grand Vizier.

A point in negotiating the solution could be the fact that Ipsilanty was allegedly drunk when the incident occurred. He seems to have visited the university directly after being entertained by the Countess von K., whose generosity is famous at the Swedish Court.

Some facts

HD! is an art project using the conventions of computer gaming, and whose main purpose is to reflect on the culture of war.

General presentation

The public is accessing HD! via an installation consisting of 2-to-up fitness machines connected to a media system (computer + data projector + sound amplification). The setup gives access to a multi users' environment, which is essentially a simulator of European history generated through a training routine.

Game experience

Through workout the user is given an instrument to influence those political developments and change history into a personal fiction. Prior to starting a workout the user has 3 options:
— time platform;
— avatar (political unit representing the user);
— target (political unit that the user aims at conquering).

While working out, the user triggers the game, which unfolds at two levels: the graphic environment and the sound environment.

Graphic environment

The 3D map of Europe with emphasized political borders. The graphic environment is based on information provided by art history, military history, documentary and feature films, news-

reels, captions etc., redesigned and organized in a database. The database access is conditioned by the preliminary options and physical performance.

Navigation

The graphic environment has three levels of navigation, which can be explored successively:

— the tactical level, with a general view of the European map, providing direct response to the workout by the increase/decrease of the avatar;

— low altitude navigation, giving access to limited areas where visual information provides guide lines to the game;

— the dungeons, accessible through specific key points, and bearing the function of indirect value-adding to the avatar via information gathering.

Sound environment

A mix of war, cultural, political and other human generated sounds shape a mood-setting ambience where the narrative channel interferes, bringing short dialogues between various supporting characters. Defined also at the level of graphics, those characters give guidance to the players, keeping alive the quotational character of Happy Doomsday! as "a game about game playing".

Narrative settings

Providing meaning to, and reflection on the subjects portrayed with the system, the narrative environments are built both by visuals and by sound, according to story boards that take into account real historical developments extracted from their context and transformed into scenarios with symbolic quality. Narratives are determinants for structuring the databases access, and are related to the general development of the HD! experience, setting the framework of each game.

Hardware interface

Each machine is designed to perform the function of a joy pad, allowing the player to:

— influence the war procedures (workout increases the area of the aggressor country)
— navigate at various view points of the interface;
— access extra links and experience different levels of the game.