

## Dark Alliance - 1/72nd Cimmerians Fantasy Figures

Review by Jonathan Aird



The Ukraine-based Dark Alliance figure manufacturer has, over the last few years, built an impressive range of fantasy figures in 1/72nd scale. A large number of their sets are inspired by *The Lord of the Rings* - in particular drawing inspiration from the very successful film series. However there are other ranges being expanded on - some drawing on Greek and Egyptian myths, others fitting the more modern zombie/post-apocalypse genre and also figures inspired by the Conan films of Arnold Schwarzenegger (*Conan the Barbarian*, *Conan the Destroyer*, and the Conan-in-all-but-name character in *Red Sonja*).

There are three main sets for this last - two of infantry and one of cavalry - sold under the title of "Cimmerians". They are wonderfully over-the-top figures in the spirit of those films, and I was tempted to get them because I have been looking at putting together a couple of small armies for the ruleset, *Vis Magica*, which I've had for ages but never really done anything with!

These are a lively range of figures, pictures of some sprues of figures are given below. Two of the boxes contain foot figures in "Conan poses" which are based on various sword fighting showoff scenes from the films - the mounted Cimmerians set contains a foot figure with the classic sword over the head, hand held out to ward off the opponent. Some might feel a shield would be of more use than a hand, but this *is* Conan.



The rest of the figures look like a combination of Conan's friends and his enemies - plenty of figures with swords and plenty with oversized hammers and axes, whilst clothing runs from the loincloth to chain mail. Helmets, where worn, often run to the "horned helmet" look. The second set of foot figures has a significant amount of flash on each sprue, which is a shame, but the other two boxes were pretty much flash-free. Whilst most of the figures are clearly warriors of one type or another, there is a shaman-type figure in Box Set 2 which will be handy as a low-level magic user - sadly there's nothing along the lines of James Earl Jones's portrayal of Thoth-Amon.



The flash aside, the figures are very nice - sculpting is up with the likes of Strelets, although a few poses are a little flat. I did buy some of the more recent packs of Dark Alliance figures at the same time (reviews coming soon!) and these are even better - Dark Alliance really are well worth considering for 20mm fantasy gaming.



At the price - £7.99 (about \$11.00) - they are really hard to beat. A word of warning though - I got mine from Hannants and I would recommend using a similarly reputable plastic kit specialist. I have seen these same figures on Ebay and on Amazon at more than twice the price - so, really it is a case of buyer beware.

One strange thing is that Dark Alliance have rather undersold their products - the infantry boxes are listed as Set 1 containing 10 poses and 40 figures (i.e. 4 sprues) and Set 2 containing 11 poses and 33 figures (i.e. 3 sprues). This did make me question whether Set 2 was worth purchasing but in the end I obviously did.

When the boxes arrived I was pleasantly surprised to find that Set 1 actually contains 11 poses and 44 figures, whilst set 2 contains 10 poses and 4 sprues giving 40 figures! So instead of the 74 foot figures (including the one in the cavalry box) I thought I would have to build the army with I actually had 85, which added some flexibility to the organisation I was planning on. The cavalry box is accurate in saying that there are 10 mounted figures and 1 foot figure in that set, and I may have to invest in another cavalry box.







As mentioned I'm going to use these figures with *Vis Magica* (I think!), but will modify the number of figures per base. As written in the rules, the 15mm/20mm base size is a bit crowded with 20mm figures. Close order infantry for example should be 12 figures on a base 6cm by 3cm and they just don't fit. I'm still considering whether it is better to have fewer figures per base or instead go for using the recommended number of figures per base of the 20mm figure bases but



putting them on the 25cm figure bases (9cm by 4.5cm). If I do that, I'll definitely need some more figures!







