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Best of Greyhawk VII

Edited by

Nathan E. Irving

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By Tal Meta

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Foreword

Technical notes first. I have tried to keep a consistent format throughout, but accidentally deleted dates for the Al-Qadim entries, and possibly others. The spellcheck function on the computer I am using has an automatic response, and tends to "fix" certain problems, most notably when two letters are capitalized together. I have tried to make Samantha's name come out correctly, but may have missed a few -- this may also affect certain other names.

I broke up several series of posts, notably TSR Roger's notes, (which ran into the quasi-deities topic) and the pantheons of the Flanaess, (which was simply VERY long). I thought it would be easier to read and digest in smaller, single-topic pieces.

In some places, I corrected spelling, or made changes that had been noted in a later post (and deleted the latter). If I altered something that should have been correct in the original, please notify me, and I'll put a correction (of a correction) in the next Best Of...

Congratulations to MB Drapier, Sabretore, Psychlops, Aria13, and Qsamantha, who wrote 9/10ths of this Best Of...

Regards,
Nathan Irving, Editor
nellisir@mediaone.net

ROGER'S NOTES

By TSR Roger

Subj: QSam's Hardby

Date: 95-09-19 22:34:37 EST

From: TSR Roger

I read through QSamantha's notes on her version of Hardby, and I liked it with one main quibble concerning Mordenkainen. I really see him as being unconcerned about allowing women into the Circle of Eight--if he didn't want her, she wouldn't be there. On the other hand, QSam's workup is internally logical and consistent, and everyone gets to play the NPCs as they wish.

What I was more interested in, however, was how this information is used in actual game play. We at TSR (and I hope I am not stepping on toes here) belatedly realized that we had started out the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting with tons of background data but few adventures. We needed more hooks and developed scenarios that worked with the background hand-in-hand. I can see some good hooks in the material presented by QSam (and you can ALWAYS measure the worth of background information by the number of hooks you can find in it), but I'd like to hear from her and others about what exactly you can do with a Hardby-centered campaign. The idea has lots of merit to me, but what do others think? Roger

Subj: Odds & Ends & Drow

Date: 95-09-19 22:40:02 EST

From: TSR Roger

I greatly appreciated everyone's help on the [he squints at the index card with the information on it] Erelhei-Cinlu problem I had. I am writing an article for POLYHEDRON Newszine on original campaigns, and I was using Celene (a.k.a. Kule) as an example of a strange but functional Underdark campaign. I will give proper attribution to those who helped me out, once I go back and look up their names again. [flushes red even though no one can see him]

I am postulating that the drow of Kule have contact with Erelhei-Cinlu and Menzoberranzan through Lolth's Demonweb, as well as through spelljammers and occasional teleport spells, gates, or devices. The Kule drow don't especially get along with the drow of the other two places, but they at least won't start shooting on sight. They trade information, spells, pet monsters, slaves, etc. I'll add more information on this later to the Underdark folder, where it also belongs. Roger

Subj: Oeridian Gods & Ginsel

Date: 95-10-06 13:51:35 EST

From: TSR Roger

I know that few people here use the SPELLJAMMER rules, but I thought I would add a note here on how I was using the gods of the Flanaess for that system.

I was working up the crescent world of Ginsel, from Greyspace, and had decided that most of Ginsel's population is descended from Oeridians who migrated there using magical gates some centuries ago as part of a general drive toward expansion. The primary deity worshiped on Ginsel (as I have it) is Zilchus, as much of little Ginsel's economy is increasingly dependent on wildspace trade. (Ginsel is only 1,000 miles across, perhaps smaller overall than the Flanaess.) Besides Zilchus, a few gods relating to rogues, magic, and luck are also worshiped, again as a consequence of the world's trade dependencies. Ginsel is on the same level--magically, culturally, and technologically--as the Flanaess. I wanted to tie the two worlds closely together with roots in the past and other common elements, though Ginsel will always have its own kink to things.

I'm not able to get to my notes on Ginsel yet (an article on it will appear in POLYHEDRON Newszine in the future, if I am lucky), but I will post some other deity-based notes here in the near future. Roger

Subj: Oeridian Gods & Ginsel II

Date: 95-10-06 14:14:54 EST

From: TSR Roger

Found my notes. The two major religions on Ginsel now are of Zilchus and (of course) Celestian, with minor appearances by Rudd, Boccob, and Ralishaz (the latter not really being worshiped so much as "bought off" with minor sacrifices to avoid bad luck). Some Suel gods (Norebo, Kurell, Syrul) are worshiped as well as "outsider" gods from other spheres, thanks to the effects of spelljamming, but these are in the minority.

Ginsel, as I have it, was originally but thinly settled by the Suloise ages ago, but they largely destroyed themselves in civil wars and demon-summoning. The Oeridians who came later generally avoid the old, haunted ruins--though adventurers do not. Ginsel is almost entirely "civilized" and farmed, though a few regions are still wild and left alone.

I won't take up much time here with this (anything more properly belongs in the SPELLJAMMER folder), but

I post this only to show that elements of Oerth can be intergrated into related campaigns. The discussion of Oerthian religion here is marvelous. Roger

Subj: Rudd, Gods, & Ginsel III
From: TSR Roger

Date: 95-10-08 09:33:18 EST

I don't have any details on the goddess herself. I have notes that small temples and shrines to Rudd are found at spelljammer ports, where crews, captains, and merchant princes toss coins into the collection boxes to curry her favor. She's usually depicted as an attractive young Oeridian woman, always smiling, often holding dice and sometimes dressed in ship crew's clothing. Small charms of Rudd (again, usually dice with her smile on one face) are carried by some crew.

The people of Ginsel involved with merchant trade and spelljamming are very pragmatic. They dump money in the temples' coffers and expect favors in return. Most gods are happy to oblige in minor ways, so everyone benefits. There are some "outsider" deities, either elven (Corellon), dwarven (Vergadain), or Realmsian (Selune, Tymora, Lirra, Beshaba), but these are in very minor shrines with small followings, almost all from spelljammer crews who leave soon thereafter. Roger

QUASI-DEITIES OF GREYHAWK

(Or, Daern it, I couldn't Tuerny those aKyussed sons of ...)

By TSR Roger & Psychlops

Subj: Quasi-Deities (Again)

Date: 95-09-21 15:35:02 EST

From: TSR Roger

To redeem myself for the Mordenkainen mess, I dug through my notes and thought I would post the name of some NPCs in the GREYHAWK setting that I thought were or are quasi-deities, besides Heward, Keoghtom, and Murlynd. Comments on the list are welcome. In no particular order:

The Cat Lord (Rexfelis): I thought this character would be a good QD, but I haven't seen the PLANESCAPE version.

Johydee: cleric/illusionist connected with espionage, fakery for defensive/offensive purposes, infiltration. Maker or user of the Mask.

Daern: LN wizard with fortress-engineering streak. Maker of Instant Fortress. Popular with inventors and castle-builders.

Nolzur: neutral wizard with advanced knowledge of alchemy and fine arts.

Quaal: chaotic elf about whom little is known.

Tuerny the Merciless: historical figure, greatly feared, LE align. Symbolized tyranny, imprisonment, jails, summoning. Rumored to have been destroyed or changed by his Flask. If alive, is extremely dangerous; may be in hiding and inactive.

Sustarre: druid hierophant of Beory. Invented many druid spells commonly used in Flanaess (without his name on them). Whereabouts unknown, but probably alive.

Kwalish: Wizard who liked to explore the oceans. Sometimes said to be a tinker gnome (he wasn't) because his Apparatus is so weird. Rumored to have a sea-bottom fortress, where he keeps making those crab-sub.

Bilarro: Wizard/paladin who constantly hunted down criminals. Invented many spells and devices for capturing victims unharmed, but few of these survived. Believed killed.

Kyuss: Inventor of the "Sons," an undead native to Oerth. An evil priest, master of necromancy, CE beyond doubt. Believed dead, but no one is betting on it. Inactive, anyway.

Kuroth: infamous neutral thief who discovered the powers of the Quill. Vanished long ago, but almost certainly not dead, just enjoying himself. Probably wandering the multiverse, filthy rich and lucky.

Lum the Mad: Many rumors, little known. Either a wizard or technologist, may have turned self into robotlike being (golem?). Not seen or heard from in ages. Inactive? Dead?

That's most of my list. These would be good for starting adventures, using them like Lolth or Gandalf (depending on their alignments).

Roger

Subj: The way I see it. vol. II

Date: 95-09-21 21:19:07 EST

From: Psychlops

The Council of Greyhawk

I'm not sure what need the Council was formed in response to, other than a vague desire to "get organized". Now it seems that this desire has mostly dissipated into frustration or indifference. This seems almost inevitable, but one contributing factor has been the Council's self-imposed limitations. It has never (as far as I know) moved beyond this TSR-AOL forum. While there are a number of talented people here, I believe that there are at least as many elsewhere on the net, and even more offline. Though the Council may feel unable to move its flagship Oerth Journal into hard print, they might consider it in their best interest to make their presence known on Usenet or other online services.

Copyright

MB has remarked quite aptly on the facts of this dispute. Basically, it all comes down to legal decisions that haven't been made yet. But TSR's promotion of imaginary rights is the common method used by attorneys. It's simply the time-honored practice of throwing all the <excrement> that you have at "them" (usually the adversary -- in this case, the consumer), and seeing what sticks. This is another case where TSR's marketing staff fail in their duties.

It is in their interest to promote fan involvement in TSR's games. They should be spend their efforts trying to find ways to make this easier, including working with TSR's legal and design departments to find ways to encourage such involvement while looking after TSR's very legitimate business interests.

Mordenkainen in aspic

Chaos has already answered the proposition regarding Mordenkainen's representation by Cook or Sargent, and its dissimilarities from the Ed "the Raincoat" Greenwood (one for the 'Freake!) presentation. If I may offer my simple definition as well: the Greyhawk Mordenkainen is flawed -- the Greenwood Mord is a fool. Greenwood's Mord is just playing Second Banana to Elminster's Top Banana (more on that spell when time permits...); "official" or "canonized" status need not be imparted to every magazine article that mentions the World of Greyhawk.

Lords of Evil

The increased frequency of netherbeings in Sargent's Greyhawk may make them seem like common mercenaries, but they are something more than that. They are true devourers. They come to kill and conquer, but without any real ties to the world(s) they are summoned into. This makes them vulnerable. They do not belong in the natural world, and can only be "harbored" by powerful magic that can prevent them from being ejected from the Prime Material. Their area allowed of manifestation is limited, but quite intensely occupied. The best example of a demonized realm is the area of Chathold in ruined Almor. It is a horrid environment. Fiends haven't been "stripped of their mystique" by this exposure, but parts of Greyhawk have become tormented lands of Evil. A DM must be prepared to deal with the tangible results of occupation by preternatural evil entities in order to run a campaign in such a setting. I am not so prepared. But if they have become banal, that is the fault of the DM.

Quasi-Deities

Two more for your list Rog:

1) Daoud - an illusionist of sublime skill, I see him as a figure like Diogenes. He has long searched for the Pure Light of Truth (and found Pholtus lacking?), but ultimate Illumination has always eluded him.

2) Azor-alq - actually closer to a Hero-Deity (like Kelanen), he is a culture hero who represents the ideals of Baklunish honor and nobility. His sign is the Dragon of Gold.

I had never thought of Sustarre as a potential Quasi-deity, but I like the idea. Kwalish is another excellent choice, but I think *any* reference to tinker-gnomes is inappropriate for Greyhawk. Finally, the Mage of the Valley would also be better described in terms of Quasi-divinity; I know that "officially" he is Jaran Krimeeah, but this character is so uninteresting that it must be a put-on!

Just some thoughts,
Psychlops

Subj: Re:Quasi-Deities

Date: 95-09-21 22:04:22 EST

From: TSR Roger

Psychlops: I had Azor-Alq down on the list, too, but I'd put him down as deceased. Maybe he isn't, but he's supposed to have a tomb out in the Dramidj Ocean, if I remember my GHAdv material (I won't bother to look it up; it's too late and I'm too sleepy, and I'd have to wake up my wife).

I had one other one that would be good--Zaene (a.k.a. Zaeen, Xaene, etc.). He would most definitely be alive, extremely evil, and (maybe) on the run from the disintegrating Great Kingdom. I'd give him wizard, thief, and clerical powers, shortly to make a reappearance. He would be a mathematician in part, fond of mazes, and know a lot about necromancy and unclean things. I'd expand on the material in DRAGON issue #59, page 24. I suspect, though, I have missed something else about him, probably in some of Carl Sargent's works. Maybe someone else can enlighten us on this.

It would be great to have old Kyuss show up, though, with some of his latest undead things. It might be even better if Kyuss showed up with Tuerny the Monster, Zaene, and Demogorgon's eldest offspring. Imagine the look on the players' faces, the screams of horror and disbelief.... ah, it really takes me back. :) Roger

Subj: You know, just maybe....

Date: 95-09-21 22:11:28 EST

From: TSR Roger

...if Kyuss showed up in the City of Greyhawk and offed some of Mordenkainen's male pals on a lark, or otherwise threatened the stability of the globe, Mordy might have a different attitude toward the surviving female wizards whose help he will desperately need.

And a note for QSAm: I have no complaints at all now about your work on Hardby. You did better research than I, and your set-up works. (If I ran Mordy, though, he'd be a little different.) I wish your work were official and published as an alternative campaign starter, but it's great anyway. If you run this in a live campaign, please post on how it goes. Inquiring minds.... Roger

Subj: Xaene the Accursed Date: 95-09-21 23:27:44 EST
From: Psychlops

The wizard Xaene, according to both Fate of Istus and Ivid the Undying, is actually a lich. Though he was not technically even high enough in level to achieve lichdom, he was cursed by Nerull to become such an undead creature; even had this not occurred, he was neither powerful nor many-faceted enough (yet) to become a quasi-deity.

Gygax described the process of becoming a quasi-deity (what I call the Principles of Quasi-Attainment) as requiring multi-class or dual-class work, and also the completion of special "quest-tests". It seems as though Quasi-Attainment is achieved by going beyond the rules, i.e., the inherent limitations of class restrictions, and using these newly gained abilities in fulfilling "quests" that test the character's mastery of these varied functions and serve to integrate them in the character. The result is a unique character that surpasses not only the abilities, but the sensibilities of "mere mortals".

Xaene may possibly have taken the beginning steps on the path to Quasi-divinity, but he would still have had a very long way to go.

Just a thought,
Psychlops

Subj: The Quasi-Divine Date: 95-09-22 21:50:12 EST
From: Psychlops

Roger included Johydee, Daern, Nolzer, Quaal, and Tuerny in his list of quasi-deities. As Sabretore points out, all of these characters were listed as inactive quasi-deities by Gygax, so Roger's reference to them as such is perfectly appropriate. They all have distinctive, "miscellaneous" magic associated with their names (up to the level of Artifact status in Johydee's example). Gygax wrote that there were actually "quite a number of such...in Greyhawk's World", though lesser personages such as Mordenkainen were "not as powerful or broadly endowed."

Quasi-deities therefore are one part of the hierarchy of power (or Power) in Greyhawk: beginning with the lowest level of character (even 0-level, if you like those rules in Greyhawk Adventures), advancing to minor or major Personage status (at least "name-level" in 1st Ed. jargon), then to Quasi-Deity (something equating to the "advanced being" levels of Dark Sun, but specific to Greyhawk). After that point such characters are closer to divine than mortal, and advancement to Hero- then Demi-Deity seems to alter some element of the character's identity. (Zagig becomes Zagyg.)

The actual rules framework for such advancement has never been presented, but I believe it could be developed in a playable manner -- necessarily campaign specific (Greyhawk specific in this case) -- that makes Living Legends out of such characters. With such rules development, a character could theoretically be played from the non-level stage to the level-transcendent stage. As far as I know, only Greyhawk has established such a potential for depth and breadth of *playable* characters. (Though Mystara came close, before they abandoned the underappreciated D&D rules.)

The main problem I see in taking the game in this direction is the elimination of character-class distinctions. These are possibly the most vilified rules in the AD&D canon, not because they are unrealistic (the superficial complaint), but because they *limit* characters, forcing them to assume actual roles that in turn force said characters to cooperate. This is the essence of the class-based xD&D rules. Obviously, rules for Quasi-Attainment would have to find other mechanisms for limiting Quasi-Deities.

These difficulties are very challenging, and I don't know how they could best be met. But this is why I find the concept of Quasi-Deities so intriguing: unlike the ubiquitous "munchkin" or mega-characters, there is actual game-substance to these characters. It's a question of learning how to define these characters -- they are a puzzle in the game, just as they must be to the "mortals" who encounter them. They are a mystery that has never been solved, and for me that is reason enough to keep them in the World of Greyhawk.

Just a thought,
Psychlops

Subj: I [heart] Quasi-Deities Date: 95-09-23 12:12:49 EST
From: TSR Roger

However, the best use of quasi-deities in GH is in the background. PCs ran through Murlynd's home in EX2, played with his VCR, raided his frig, etc. PCs get to play in a demigod's leftover home in <Greyhawk Ruins>. Use the QDs as background material.

Example: The PCs get a chance to go to Luna, Oerth's bigger moon, and start to explore a ruin to which they've been directed by some sage or whatnot. Oerth turns out to have many, many carnivorous plants or unfamiliar types, savage brainless monsters, and no intelligent life. The ruins that the PCs are exploring turn out to be part of a

vast laboratory system for creating new monsters from old ones. And the owner and director of the ruins is revealed (by archaeological examination) to have been Tuerny the Merciless--sometime after his accident with the Iron Flask. What was Tuerny doing here? Is he still alive? Was he planning something for Oerth? The PCs never get to meet Tuerny (not for a very long time), but his handiwork is visible, and numerous plot lines are available for future use concerning him. (Maybe someone is importing his new carnivorous plants, for instance.)

I have no problem with the concept of quasi-deities. I would play them as humans with egos and manipulative powers and goals beyond normal reason, but they are still reasonably human in their responses. They can be mature or immature, loving or hateful, but they are all smart and powerful and long-lived. And they think they know best about certain matters, no matter how reasonable they are otherwise. Think of Lolth, how she was used in the GDQ modules, or all the previous comments about Gandalf and how he manipulated many events leading up to Frodo's going to Mount Doom. QDs can, if the DM chooses, have a nice place in the campaign.

My favorite would be Kyuss, however. Maybe he found Tuerny a century ago, and the two are planning a surprise party for Oerth. The PCs could run into their agents, flunkies, hirelings, and hit men for years. Interesting?
Roger

Subj: Quasi-Characters
From: Psychlops

Date: 95-09-24 21:02:24 EST

The Greyhawk Adventures hardback has an appendix with rules for 0-level player characters. I'd like to examine these rules in light of the discussions of Quasi-Deities that we've seen recently. Even as Quasi-Deities are characters that distantly approach the status of divinities, 0-level characters (or Quasi-Characters) are untrained individuals who approach the status of 1st level characters in one of the standard classes. The rules for these Quasi-Characters deal with their acquisition of class-based skills and the development of their personal attributes before they become 1st level Player Characters. The concept is well worth considering, whether it is dealt with summarily or played out in detail.

The Quasi-Character begins play without a defined class or alignment. All they have are interests and tendencies that are expressed through behavior and developed through training. (According to the 0-level rules in Greyhawk Adventures, all the 0-level characters' attributes begin with a value of three, then increase with training. While this does allow the 0-level to start with a "clean slate", I think that using this minimum attribute value is a bit excessive; only a newborn infant should have a 3 in Str, Int, Dex, and all the other attributes. It is best to determine these character attributes normally.) Quasi-Characters learn to use *individual* class-skills and proficiencies by study with an instructor or, occasionally, sheer dumb luck. Regardless of the method, the quasi-character must spend from his store of AP's (which can stand for Aptitude or Ability Points) in order to retain the use of these skills.

After a certain point, the quasi-character should have accumulated enough class specific skills to join a class. The rules in Greyhawk Adventures don't define exactly when this point is reached, nor do they describe the specific procedure that the quasi-character must complete in order to become 1st level. Obviously, success must be measured by testing the quasi-character's mastery of the functions in the chosen class. There is probably also some formal investment of the successful apprentice, including the "fixation" of a definite alignment. (This event of alignment fixation is also when a character gains his *truenam*. It allows the character to be defined in his set alignment, and benefit from the accrual of experience points in his character class. It also makes him vulnerable to the *Truenam* spell found in Unearthed Arcana.)

The process of advancement in a character class, or classes, should be fairly well understood. It is also commonly acknowledged that class-structure seems to break down after a certain point. Characters seem to become too powerful as they outgrow the class-roles that have defined their careers. It is at this point that they begin to approach the essential limits of mortal accomplishment. Their capacity to increase in levels is diminished at the height of their power. Therefore, the measure of their power is no longer defined by their class-level (or role), but begins to be expressed in the character's unique abilities, and their unique role in the campaign world.

This state is not unlike that of the Quasi-Character who possesses a few singular skills, but not complete functionality in his desired class. These unique, high-level characters demonstrate a relationship to powers beyond mortal ken. Though they are not (yet) divine, they have become quasi-divine. The procedure of attaining Quasi-Divinity should be no less substantial in game-mechanics (or "gamescience") terms than are the rules of advancement as a Quasi-Character. Clearly, the rules pertaining to Quasi-Characters still require development past the state presented in Greyhawk Adventures, while the rules for Quasi-Deities are as yet undefined.

My question is: what should be the requirements for those aspiring to Quasi-Divinity? What abilities must they master? What accomplishments must they demonstrate? What quests must they complete? In short, what moves a character from the level of powerful, mortal Personage to the state of legendary Quasi-Deity?

Though Dark Sun has its "advanced beings", D&D Mystara has its Immortals, BirthRight has its Awnsheghlien, and Forgotten Realms has Elminster, only Greyhawk has established unique, legendary characters

that can continue to contribute to the setting without dominating or destroying it. If the rules for Quasi-Deities can be clearly laid out, and the rules for Quasi-Characters fully developed, Greyhawk will have the greatest depth and variety of playable characters found in any AD&D campaign world.

Just a thought,

Psychlops

NAVAL TECHNOLOGY IN THE WORLD OF GREYHAWK

By Thane13

Subj: Naval Technology in WoG (1)

Date: 95-09-23 22:35:58 EST

From: Thane13

It has been mentioned that the nations of Oerth politically behave as 19th century European states, with 12th century technology, maintaining 17th century navies, all the while being raided by 8th century Vikings! (MB Drapier). I would like to explore this issue further, in particular, naval technology.

Overall Strategy

In naval battles, there are basically two ways to win. (A) Sink the enemy ship or (B) Capture the enemy ship. The technologies of naval warfare are developed with either of these two goals in mind.

Old Oerth Technology

There are three classes of ship type that have been developed on Oerth. I term these classes the "viking" class, the "byzantine" class, and the "merchant" class.

The viking class ships are of the typical viking longboat design--single square sails, oars, and a sleek hull. From smallest to largest, the ships are the Knarr, the Longboat then the Drakkar. These ships are built primarily for their speed and seaworthiness, but not necessarily with the idea of ship to ship combat in mind.

The byzantine class ships have square sails and oars like the viking class, but the hull design is different. This class of ships has great castle-like structures on the bow and stern called the forecastle and the sterncastle. Though these structures provide excellent protection for soldiers, they also make sailing these ships extremely awkward. The byzantine ships also have rams at the bow. A common tactic is to ram the opposing ship with it, holing it below the water line. The crew of the holed ship then has an opportunity to swarm the ramming ship and attempt to take it over. Ships in the byzantine class, from smallest to largest, are Great Galley, the Dromond, and the Galleon. Although the Great Galley is actually smaller than the Dromond, it is considered an improvement because it is more seaworthy than the Dromond.

Merchant class ships have sails and small forecastles and sterncastles, but usually no oars, as merchants like to have small crews and small salary overheads. Also, to compromising attacking capacity for speed, the ships don't have rams, thus making sailing more "hydrodynamic". Ships in the merchant class, from smallest to largest, are the Currach, the Coaster, the Cog, and the Caravel.

Weapons Technology

Old Oerth technology did not have many weapons to accomplish method A of winning naval engagements (sinking enemy ships) except for the ram. But, as mentioned, when ships ram each other, the crew of the holed ship then gets an opportunity to accomplish method B of winning naval engagements (capturing the ramming ship). Thus, most of past naval technology has been to make method B more difficult--the design of forecastles and sterncastles at the expense of maneuverability for instance. Other methods of destroying enemy ships that are possible included using flaming arrows shot either from bows or mounted ballistae. These methods, however, have had limited success. Also, mages on board may have the capability to cast destructive spells on enemy ships. However, mages are quite rare, let alone mages who serve regularly as marines or sailors.

The most important weapon development has been the demi-catapult. Regular catapults are too large and too heavy to put on ships. They also have a very parabolic firing trajectory that makes aiming for enemy ships very difficult. However, the large missiles hurled by catapults used to destroy stone walls are not necessary to destroy wooden ships. A smaller stone, and thus, a smaller catapult, would be sufficient. Furthermore, the demi-catapult could be designed to have a less parabolic projectile trajectory, making aiming easier. Incendiary missiles could more effectively start fires, but more importantly, missiles hurled by demi-catapults could shatter the enemy ships' hulls, killing or maiming crew with the fragments. The effect of this weapon on naval tactics is that ships can bombard each other from afar, killing enemy crew. Then, when the opposing ship is disabled, the capture can be made relatively easily. Demi-catapults have become important naval weapons, and the biggest ships can mount 3 or 4 of these.

Ammunition is mostly rocks, but the Great Kingdom, with its large supply of iron from Ratic, has advanced metallurgy and has made round iron balls, and even special ammunition--two balls connected with a chain for instance, to damage sails, or several small balls encased in a brittle shell, to shatter and maim more crew. These round and special munitions, however, are still very rare.

Demi Catapult--conventional munitions

Rate of Fire = 1/2 rounds

Damage (HP) = 2-16 if hit directly by one--shards inflict 1-6 pts of damage to anyone in a 20' radius if one hits the ship's hull.

Structural damage (as per Castle Guide) = 2-16

Range 6"/24" (shorter for special munitions)

Special Munitions

"Chain": 2-12 hp if hit by one, reduce opponents ship speed if it hits the sails; 1-8 Structural damage if it hits the hull; with 1-3 pts of damage of shrapnel in a 15' radius.

"Grape": Splatters in a 30' radius inflicting 1-8 pts of damage to everyone, 1-4 structural points in addition.

Hull Technology

With the advent of demi-catapults, the ram is unnecessary, fore and stern castles are irrelevant, and massive crews are not necessary. The next development, undertaken by the Sea Barons, has been to use the longer, narrower hulls on their new ships, making them faster and more maneuverable. This is essentially the hull of the merchant class of ships, replacing the byzantine hull. This class of ships was the one used by the Sea Barons to thoroughly savage the Lordship of the Isles' ships in the Battle of the Tilva Strait, as the Barons' ships were able to outmaneuver the Lordships' ships.

On Oerth, modern naval fleets (Keoland, Great Kingdom, Nyrond, Sea Barons, Lordship of the Isles, Sea Princes) still consist mainly of the byzantine class ships. The new hulled ships are present in small numbers, but this is the style being built, eventually to totally replace the byzantine hulled ships.

I have classed the 'narrow hull' ships into three sizes:

Corvette-- Max. Crew = 60, Max Demi-Catapults = 2

Frigate-- Max. Crew = 120, Max Demi-Catapults = 3

Dreadnought-- Max. Crew = 240, Max. Demi Catapults = 4

Most new ships built are the small corvettes, but frigates are built for admirals as flagships. Only one dreadnought is known to exist. It is the flagship of the High Admiral of the Great Kingdom.

Demi-catapults are mounted on stands that can be swiveled by crew members. Dreadnoughts unleashing a "broad"side are an awesome sight, resembling modern battleships firing their massive turreted guns to the side.

Sail Technology

Winds near the coast are often shifty and unpredictable. Local peasant fishermen often ply coastal waters, and they must find a way to move their boats and deal with these winds. Rowing or hiring rowers just will not do. Also, timing and speed are important if one wants to catch maximal fish. Hence, they developed the triangular sail, applying Bernoulli's Principle to harness wind power, and to sail in any direction, almost directly into the wind if necessary. Using this type of sail greatly increases maneuverability, and combined with the narrow hull design, ships can maximize maneuverability. However, there is a certain point where the sail maneuverability benefit becomes meaningless because the hull gets so big and bulky that turning the ship becomes difficult in any case, regardless of sail type.

Such insight and skills are not quite known to the rich and the noble because they simply have not had to put up with the trials and hardships of the common fisherman. If speed was needed, they simply told the rowers to pull harder. However, the Keoish privateers, seeking glory and riches, are well versed in sailing. In addition to corvettes, the ships these privateers use to harry the Treasure Fleets of the Scarlet Brotherhood are called sloops, or schooners. They utilize the narrow hull design, and the triangular sails.

Schooner-- Max. Crew = 60, Max. Demi Catapults = 2 In direction with the wind, schooners are slower than corvettes, but are faster than corvettes going into the wind.

Crew for the other classes of ships is noted in the 2nd Edition Players Handbook, but here is a list of maximum demi-catapults that can be mounted.

Viking class = 0

Great Galley, Dromond = 2
Galleon = 4
Currach = 0
Coaster = 1
Cog, Caravel = 2

As for costs, if PCs want to buy one of the newer ships:

Corvette, Schooner: 30,000 gp

Frigate: 60,000 gp depending on availability

Dreadnought: 150,000 gp depending *very much* on availability!!

BEOWULF THE BOLD BARBARIAN

By MB Drapier

Subj:Re:Naval Technology in WoG (4)

Date: 95-09-24 10:27:53 EST

From: MB Drapier

Thane,

Nice work! Thanks for sharing it!

As a reward, I'll treat you to a rendition of "Beowulf the Bold Barbarian," a new translation of the epic.

Beowulf the bold barbarian
Had a very shiny sword,
And if you ever saw it,
You would even call him lord!

All of the bold retainers
Used to laugh and call him names.
They never thought poor Beowulf
Ever could be someone's thane. :(

Then one groggy listless eve,
Hrothgar came to say,
"Beowulf with your sword so bright,
Won't you guard my hall tonight?" :)

Then how retainers loved him
As they shouted out with glee,
"Beowulf the bold barbarian,
You'll go down in poetry!"

Note: Alternate last line is "You'll cause scholarly controversy," with the accent on the second syllable of "controversy," as JRR Tolkien would have said it).

MB

GEM OF THE FLANAESS: THE CITY OF GREYHAWK AFTER THE GREAT FIRE

By QSamantha

Subj: City of Greyhawk

Date: 95-09-29 08:41:37 EST

From: QSamantha

Has anybody done anything with the City of Greyhawk itself? We've talked about various areas but there has been little mention of the city itself. TSR seems to think that the Free City is the center of the setting. There is the City of Greyhawk boxed set and one half of FtA is devoted to the city and its environment.

I have only run one true campaign in the City of Greyhawk. In the campaign, I'm now running the city is becoming more important and I've had to consider how I will run it post-FtA using the idea of a Greyhawk Renaissance. What follows are some of the changes I've instituted. They should be read in conjunction with my much earlier Greyhawk Renaissance posts, particularly with reference to the Great Greyhawk Fire.

I'd be interested in any reactions, suggestions or other ways the City of Greyhawk has been dealt with.

QSamantha

Who's Who in Greyhawk

* The Circle of Eight is no longer Eight members strong. Tenser and Otiluke are dead. Rary has left the group for the Bright Desert. Jallarzi Sallavarian has left the group to become the court wizard to the Despotrix of Hardby. Only Mordenkainen, Bigby, Otto, Drawmij and Nystul remain! No attempts have been made to recruit new members chiefly because few who might qualify are willing to risk being drawn into the three cornered fight between Rary, Jallarzi and the remaining Circle.

* The Directing Oligarchy has also undergone drastic changes in the aftermath of the Greyhawk Fire.

* Nerof Gasgal remains the Lord Mayor and a Director.

* Derider Fanshen, former Constable, was killed fighting the Fire and has been replaced by Wasim Qharallah! Wasim's Golden Scimitar mercenary group fought the Fire bravely and in the aftermath were one of the few organized groups able and willing to maintain order. With Derider's death, Wasim was officially offered the post and a seat in the Oligarchy. He accepted. The Golden Scimitar was made the official constabulary, merging with the surviving forces.

* Tigran Geller, who replaced Sental Nurev as Captain-General of the Watch, was also killed fighting the fire. Rashif Iqbal, the pit champion, has replaced him as Captain-General and a Director. Iqbal was the only man with sufficiently commanding presence to rally the remaining members of the Watch and cow the mob of looters who had pressed Wasim's Golden Scimitar.

* Org Nenshen remains Guildmaster of Thieves and a Director but has become a far more ominous presence after having sought shelter from the Fire deep within the Guild's cellars.

* Vesparian Lafanel remains Guildmaster of Assassins and a Director, having previously replaced Turin Deathstalker.

* Kieren Jalucian remains Guildmaster of Wizards and President of the Society of the Magi and a Director.

* Sarana, High Matriarch of Pelor has joined Ravel Dasinder, Patriarch of Boccob and Jerome Kazinskaia, Patriarch of Rao, in the Oligarchy.

* Cariel Mansharn, Laup Cobrun, Carmen Halmaster and Dernen Nathane remain Directors from the Merchants' and Traders' Union.

* Bodmi Hollardel remains Guildmaster of the Jewelers and Gemcutters Guild and a Director.

* Sir Anton Palmirian remains a Director and Guildmaster of the Lawyers and Scribes.

* Glodreddi Bakkanin remains a Director and Inspector of Taxes.

* New Directors include Nichola Cynan, Robran Valdeze and Cesare Ferrante all Merchant Bankers representing the new Bankers' House.

Embassies

With the founding of the Greyhawk League, the City of Greyhawk has become the diplomatic center of the Flaneass. Most countries maintain embassies in the city and espionage is a common affair.

Greyhawk is a unique diplomatic environment because there is no ruler with a traditional court. The Lord Mayor represents the City's interests in League Business but does not hold court. This leaves the ambassadors very much on their own. They have responded by regularly hosting receptions for one another, to which all Directors and other influential persons will be invited. Even enemies maintain an air of civility, while they spy upon each other from the shadows.

The newly constructed League Hall in the High Quarter is the other center of diplomatic life. A huge baroque structure, the League Hall houses League offices and records. The League Meeting Hall dominates the building and is where the League officially meets.

The following is a list of ambassadors:

The Greyhawk League:

Nerof Gasgal - Lord Mayor of Greyhawk, League Signatory
Baroness Carnelia Radilaene - Ambassador from the County of Urnst, League Signatory
Count Reichart Petrides - Ambassador from the Duchy of Urnst, League Signatory
Lord Kenneth Falkenbrunien - Ambassador from Verbobonc, League Signatory
Jarad Pertinax - Ambassador from Dyvers, League Signatory

Other Embassies:

Lady Fioranna Aielestriel - Ambassador from The Great Kingdom of Nyrond
Count-Duke Ramiro Olivares - Ambassador from Keoland
Aaron Strachan - Ambassador from Furondy
Monsiegnor Louis de Bienvenu - Ambassador from Veluna and cleric of Pholtus.
Lady Aqaria Dominel - Ambassador from Hardby

Notable Expatriate:

"Duke" Harach Steingrim - Rightful Ruler of the Duchy of Tenh.

In the wake of Terrone Falthing's coup in Tenh, an expatriate community has sprung up in Greyhawk, seeking league assistance and that of any other nation that will listen. The "Duke" is constantly plotting his return to power in Tenh and is something of a laughing stock.

The Grand Citadel

Heavily damaged in the Fire, the Grand Citadel has been rebuilt on a much grander scale. The old design was judged squat and blocky, more a fortress than a citadel. When the Directors decided to have Greyhawk immortalized on canvas, they went so far as to have the artist paint the Citadel that is only now completed. This explains why pictures of the Citadel tended to look grand but did not match the groundplan.

The new Citadel is arguably the finest castle in the Flaneass. The Battle Wall remains, along with the Battle Gate and Gatehouse, the Wall Towers, the Great Blockhouse and the Half Circle Wall. The rest of the Citadel has been completely redesigned, more along the lines of crenelated chateau. The finest workmen and materials were used in the construction. While some cited this as unseemly extravagance, it was in fact done in large part as a make work project to give the otherwise unemployed jobs. In the process, Greyhawk received a magnificent new seat of power, the old Citadel having been damaged and being in need of reconstruction anyway.

A more biting criticism has been that the new Citadel is simply too grand for Greyhawk. There is no king and even the Lord Mayor is but the leading member of the Directing Oligarchy. Despite Greyhawk's oligarchic government, the people see themselves as essentially equals with the freedom to rise on their own merit. The new Citadel strikes some as too pompous.

On the other hand, there have been calls from some quarters for a King of Greyhawk. Various individuals have offered up their services as GreyKing only to be jailed or exiled by the Oligarchy. However, such incidents only serve to keep the issue alive in the minds of would-be nobility and even some of the Directors.

The High Quarter

The High Quarter was almost completely gutted in the Fire. Only the House of the Knights of the Holy Shielding, the Patricians' Club and the Royal Opera House survived. While many of the former residents have rebuilt, there have been significant changes.

In the wake of the Greyhawk Wars, Greyhawk has been flooded by refugees, many of them quite wealthy. With the founding of the Greyhawk League other fortunes have been made overnight. The old High Quarter wasted land. Estates sprawled and the Quarter had the look of a vast pasture dotted with great barns. No longer. Demand for land and the prices buyers have been willing to pay have greatly increased the population density in the High Quarter. There still remain large estates but not so large as before. The Quarter is not crowded but neither does it look so pastorally empty either.

The Wizards' Guildhall was the first of the destroyed buildings to be rebuilt. It took one night. Instead of a pyramid, the new guildhall is an irregular hexagonal tower supported by six flying buttresses each capped by a lesser square tower, all made of black basalt. The look is at once jarring and menacing.

Rumor has it that it was only with infernal aid that the tower was constructed. Whatever the truth of the matter, it cannot be denied that the Guild has a much more ominous cast. Gone are many of the former members of the Guild. Fully half have disappeared. In their place are more saturn wizards. Other wizards have quit the Guild without offering much of an explanation. These outcast wizards have set up shop throughout the city. The Guild does not move against them either because they believe them beneath notice or fear galvanizing the outcasts into a rival organization.

PS - I plan to post details on the changes in the Wizards' Guild at some point in the future.

The Garden Quarter

The Garden Quarter is gone. All that remains is the Grand Theater. From the rubble, new buildings have been erected that have changed the fundamental nature of this quarter.

The establishments, many more than before, that predominately cater to the well-to-do have returned. The gardens, flowered walks and hanging pots have been replanted. The change has come in the great influx of temples. All of the old temples have been rebuilt but many faiths took the opportunity to build much more elaborate structures. Other faiths that had been shut out of Greyhawk or the quarter have also moved in. Businesses that cater to pilgrims and the temples have also sprung up. It is fair to say that the Garden Quarter might also be called the Temple Quarter.

The brashest temple among the newly arrived faiths is that of Cyndor. The Dreaming Temple, as his temple is known, is a magnificent cruciform edifice with a central dome all built of gold veined white marble with malachite columns. The hedonistic rites of the temple have attracted many worshippers and the jealousy of more established faiths. Naturally, rumors abound about the Rites of Cyndor.

PS - I plan to post details on the Dreaming Temple at some point in the future. [Editor's Note: Further information on Cyndor and the Dreaming Temple are found in Greyhawk Folder #21, October 7th. Nell.]

Clerksburg

This section of the city was the only one to remain largely untouched by the Fire. Damage was minor and has all been repaired. Greyhawk can well be grateful for that. The students continue to flock to Greyhawk's colleges and universities and pump revenue into the local economy. This source of income and the building of the new Citadel may have been all that prevented Greyhawk from being economically destroyed by the Fire. Together these two sources of revenue and employment kept the artisans and craftsmen in Greyhawk and prompted them to rebuild.

Alumni also remember Greyhawk more or less fondly. These alumni are Greyhawk's unofficial ambassador corp and serve their alma mater well in foreign lands.

The Artisans' Quarter

One of the most heavily damaged sections of the city, the Artisans' Quarter was a total loss. It has now been rebuilt and has triple the population density it had previously. No businesses have been lost and many new ones have arrived. The Directors have purposefully lowered taxes within the quarter to encourage new business. The Fire gave Dyvers the critical opportunity to pull even with Greyhawk in overall trade volume and the Directors are determined to win back their historic preeminence.

The Foreign Quarter

The Foreign Quarter was another total loss. No buildings survived the Fire. It is believed that Iuz' agents made certain that every building in this quarter burned.

The founding of the Greyhawk League has, however, seen the Foreign Quarter rebuilt. The building density has doubled as embassies are opened or expanded. The Tenha expatriate community has also taken up residence here.

Like a city within a city, Tenha Town has its own social divisions, businesses and crime. It is the increase in crime and the exotic Flanish cast of Tenha Town that marks it in most peoples' minds. The Tenha Thieves' Guild controls criminal activity within Tenha Town, and threatens the Greyhawk Thieves' Guild's control of the Foreign Quarter.

Many Tenha having fled for their lives have had to take menial jobs throughout the city. You can find skilled Tenha, even sages and wizards, working as common laborers just to survive. Despite a certain prejudice against the Tenha, their labor has been invaluable to the city's recovery and Tenha Town is becoming something of a tourist spot.

The River Quarter

This quarter burned brightly. Unconfirmed rumors insist that when the Directors saw that most of Greyhawk was going to be consumed by the Fire, they ordered that no effort be made to save the River Quarter. Despite the presence of several prominent temples, this quarter has long been a source of crime, chiefly linked to the Rhennee.

The temples have all relocated to the Garden Quarter and the docks, warehouses, bars and flop houses have expanded to take their place. The quarter, though of the same extent, is thus much larger. This has had the affect of increasing Greyhawk's capacity to handle trade but at the cost of increased crime.

The Rhennee control the River Quarter's criminal element almost exclusively. So great is their power that the Thieves Guild has moved against them and they have not prevailed! The Rhennee and the Guild now war over the River Quarter, making a dangerous area even more so. In retaliation, the Rhennee have even begun to challenge the Thieves Guild within other parts of the city, though not very successfully.

The Old City

The Old City, composed of the Thieves' Quarter and the Slum Quarter were both heavily damaged in the fire. Approximately 50 percent of the buildings were burned or had to be torn down. All have been rebuilt. The denizens of these quarters have demonstrated the resiliency that has allowed them to survive in poor conditions. With the influx of refugees, the Old City is more of a warren than it ever was before. All of the temples have relocated to the Garden Quarter.

The Thieves Guild

When the Great Fire broke out, Org Nenshen was within the Guildhall. Unable to escape the Fire through the mobbed streets, he took refuge deep within the cellars of the Guildhall. These cellars are extensive and comprise the remains of some earlier structure. Currently, they hold the Guild's prizes in various strong rooms and are otherwise used for storage. Much unidentifiable junk has built up over the years.

While waiting out the Fire, Org decided to amuse himself by going through some of the odds and ends. It was thus that he found The Book. An ancient tome, undoubtedly pilfered from some wizard's tower or antiquarian's shop, The Book spoke of the heretofore unknown, at least to Org, worship of malefic beings and the great power that could be gained from them. Org was intrigued.

Upon freeing himself, discrete inquiries among the temples in the city revealed little about the beings mentioned in The Book. They were largely unknown. Org became convinced that he was on to something. Since that time, Org has instituted the worship of these beings within the Guild, though not universally. He never lets the book out of his keeping but has made exception to have it copied. It is from the scribe, who like most scribes also produced a file copy of the book, that the story is known. However, shortly after relating his story, the scribe was found dead, horribly mutilated. The whereabouts of his file copy remain unknown, though the rash of book stall burglaries make it seem certain that Org did not recover it.

PS - I plan to post complete details on The Book and associated cults at some point in the future.

The Beggars Union

As if the Thieves Guild did not have enough to worry about with the Rhennee in control of the River Quarter and the Tenha Thieves' Guild threatening control of the Foreign Quarter, the Beggars Union has broken with the guild.

The Fire took a terrible toll on the poor of Greyhawk, who suffered most as the poor are wont to do. Unable to secure assistance for the Union, the Guildmaster's faction sought to provide for themselves, revealing that the Union had an unguessed at wealth. The ensuing rebellion of the rank and file successfully removed the Guildmaster's faction - permanently. The revolt was led by Christa ("Little Miss Streetwise") who first discovered the

Beggarmaster's chicanery.

Unfortunately, Christa was hardly capable of assuming the position of Beggarmaster. The Thieves Guild was none too happy with events and it looked like the beggars would fall upon themselves. Enter Blain Winterguard. The old gladiator, himself little more than a beggar, saw in Christa an opportunity and he took it. With his guidance, Christa consolidated her de facto position as Beggarmistress. Christa now runs the Beggars' Union with Blain's assistance. They make a formidable team. Christa has a knowledge of the city second to none and a definite charisma. Blain has organized and trained the beggars as a passable irregular fighting force, capable of at least defending themselves.

The Beggars' Guild has succeeded in taking complete control over criminal activity in the Slum Quarter. In concert with city wide begging activities, the Guild is more prosperous than ever before and Christa ensures that the prosperity is shared among all the beggars. With the rise of darkness within the Thieves' Guild, the beggars have even gained a cadre of disaffected thieves.

Tied down with the Rhennee, Org has been loathe to open a second front, at least until his otherworldly allies can be brought to bear. To that end, he has confined his attempts to retake the Slum Quarter to occasional incursions and otherwise agreed to a citywide truce with the beggars. How long the truce lasts remains to be seen.

Except for the fact that the Rhennee leadership is generally as despicable as that of Thieves' Guild, Christa might forge an alliance. So far, she has refused Rhennee overtures.

Bankers' House

The newest and most powerful entity in the City of Greyhawk is the Bankers' House, a guild of bankers. Banking is a relatively new concept.

Moneylenders have traditionally offered credit for sale. They continue to do so and by agreement bankers do not offer credit. Instead, bankers perform two other functions.

Bankers' primary business is in underwriting commercial ventures for a share of the profits. A merchant, unable to afford to ship his goods to Furondy where a good price might be had, can go to a banker, who will finance the venture in exchange for a share of the profits. While a moneylender might lend the merchant the money, most moneylenders do not have sufficient reserves to tie up in a few such ventures and moneylenders will demand that interest and principle be paid back, even if the venture fails. Bankers assume the risk and have the capital to finance many such ventures. While wealthy merchants have no need of bankers, small businesses, often in cooperation, do.

Secondarily, bankers need extremely secure facilities to maintain their cash reserves and valuable merchandise. Creating these storehouses of wealth is not easy. To defray part of the cost, bankers will rent secure space to others to store their valuables.

The rise of banking is the direct result of the favorable trade environment, especially in Dyvers. Dyvers, not Greyhawk, is the birthplace of banking houses and that city has prospered because of them. Greyhawk amended the city charter to allow banking houses out of fear that Dyvers bankers would soon monopolize large scale trading ventures.

The Knights of the Holy Shielding

When Iuz overran the Shield Lands, the Knights of the Holy Shielding were put to flight along with any civilians who could flee. Determined to fight Iuz and one day win back their homeland, the Knights relocated to Greyhawk, Dyvers, Hardby, Verbobonc and Leukish. A dedicated and well trained fighting force, the Knights were welcomed - at first. As the years have dragged on and peace was made with Iuz, the Knights proved no longer so welcome. In fact, they are seen as something of a threat.

Each of the Knights' chapter houses is in communication with the others and all coordinate their activities. A single Grandmistress, Katrina the last heir to the crown of the Shield Lands, oversees the Order's operations along with the Masters of the Order. To survive, the Knights have sold their services as mercenaries, often to the cities in which their chapter houses are located. They have also invested in weapon smithies and armories to provide for their needs, while turning a profit selling to the public any surplus.

The presence of such an armed, organized and seasoned fighting force with partial control of critical industries and a growing income is making the rules of the city states, and to a lesser degree Urnst, nervous. The expansion of the Knights' operations into the Wild Coast only makes matters worse. Conspiracy theorists postulate that the Knights of the Holy Shielding are planning to seize all of the city states from the Nyr Dyv to the Pomarj and unit them into a new Shield Lands! They are RIGHT!

There is a faction within the Order that plans to do exactly that. Already their agents are in place. They do not strike because they wish the Order to become stronger still and to that end actively recruit new members into the Order. They know they will only get one chance and must make it count. Katrina also opposes such a move and must be dealt with. Because of her hereditary claim to rulership, the conspirators are hesitant to merely arrange an

accident but when all else is in readiness a decision will have to be made.

GEM OF THE FLANAESS: MONSTERS OF THE CITY OF GREYHAWK

By Qsamantha

Subj: A Monstrous Compendium Date: 95-09-29 09:06:26 EST

From: QSamantha

A Monstrous Compendium

Once upon a time when TSR decided that three hole punched folders were the best thing since dice, they reissued the Monster Manual as the Monstrous Compendium in loose leaf format. They also segregated the monsters by setting.

I always thought this was colossally dumb idea and I never restricted myself to *Greyhawk* monsters or to avoiding *XTY* monsters merely because the cover didn't say *Greyhawk*. All the same, Iquander would no doubt consider the Greyhawk Monstrous Compendium as some species of *canon.* I guess I might agree to the extent that maybe the monsters in the Greyhawk Monstrous Compendium are more common in Greyhawk.

Trying to get some use of the otherwise undistinguished Greyhawk Monstrous Compendium, I've worked some of the better monsters into my campaign, particularly around the City of Greyhawk. This is what follows. I am using these monsters as foreshadowings, mixed in with Red Herrings.

QSamantha

PS - I have left some questions associated with particular monsters unresolved on purpose. I don't want to reveal what is going on until I have time to fully explain. As it stands, each monster can be used as a mini-adventure if so desired.

The Grell

The Great Fire had the unintentional side effect of laying bare much of Greyhawk's foundations, releasing creatures that had previously been confined to the sewers or below. In addition, the great heating of the earth that occurred attracted some of these creatures to the surface. One such creature is the Grell.

Believed to have been originally kept by Mindflayers as hunting creatures, the Grell escaped captivity and have become a minor danger in their own right. This danger has grown in the City of Greyhawk. The Grell population has made its way to the surface in the wake of the Fire. More troubling, these Grell appear to have developed some greater degree of intelligence. Reports of Grell using psionic disciplines have been hushed up by the temples that consider psionics heresy but the rumors persist. Among the poorer classes, reports of human sacrifices to Grell to keep them at bay have shocked the city. Curiously, Tenha Town alone remains untroubled by the Grell. Attempts to root out these foul creatures have so far produced little in the way of tangible results. Somehow the Grell are evading destruction.

Gremlins

The City of Greyhawk has a new mascot - Gremlins. The City is infested with them. So much so, that they have become taken for granted. The trouble they cause is just not sufficient to waste valuable magical resources to get rid of them. Were the Circle of Eight still intact doubtless one of its members would have rid the city of these pests. With the remaining members of the Circle occupied with weightier matters, the Gremlins go unmolested - almost.

The Greyhawk Dragons of the City have taken it upon themselves to fight this scourge. Exactly why remains uncertain. Perhaps, they are annoyed by them. Certainly, those known Greyhawk Dragons seem irritated if the topic is brought up.

The Hounds of the Hills

The Cairn Hills, always a ready source of adventure, have become more adventurous than many might care for. Among the Cairns walks a mysterious figure cloaked in black, most commonly seen near the Doom Grinder. Who the figure is, none can say, for he or she avoids all contact.

Seemingly connected with the appearance of this figure is the presence of a pack of Yeth Hounds that have taken to haunting the hills. Travel by night among the cairns has become very dangerous. Mist wolves have also come down from the mountains near Castle Maure. Strangers set upon by either the Wolves or the Hounds have on occasion reported that the other animals have appeared to save them, attacking their attackers.

Greyhawk By Night

Greyhawk has always been as much a city of the darkness as of the light. The Old City bustles with activity till just shy of dawn. Most sections of the city have lamps lit till around midnight. Except for the usual hazards associated with the dark, Greyhawk has been no more or less dangerous than any other similarly sized city. This has changed. Mists swirl through streets far removed from the River Quarter and shapes move within those mists.

Vampiric Mists, Sons of Kyuss and Sea Zombies have all been reliably reported - within the city limits! This is simply unheard of! Obviously some dark agency is at work here. The Old City seems to be the focus of this undead activity. It is whispered that Kyuss himself has returned as a lich. Of course, such tales have no basis in fact.

Pine Needles & Haystacks

Rural hicks. Rubes. Hayseeds. These are but some of the derisive names the city dwellers of Greyhawk give to the farmers and herders who work the surrounding lands. Of predominately Flan and Oeridian admixtures, these simple people mind their own business and, for the most part, ignore the insults. In turn, they are largely ignored save for the sale of their produce and the merchandise they buy.

A fundamentally druidic people, the peasants from Dyvers to Hardby remain close to nature. While they will nominally follow this faith or that, the druidic way is that which they have always followed. For generations, they have turned to druids in times of need.

The druids of the area keep to themselves. They do not advertise their presence lest they incur the wrath of more organized religions. With the tumult of recent times, the druids have had to act to protect their faithful. Adventurers trample heedlessly through fields. Soldiers take what they want. Humanoids have become more common. The time has come to raise the Sentinels.

Needlemen have been summoned from the Deep Shade and Scarecrows set up in fields. Those who go by less travelled roads would be well advised to take care and keep a civil tongue in their mouth. To be called a Wicker Man is no compliment and best to avoid being so named.

Rats

Unknown to anyone, Christa, the new Beggarmistress, suffered more terribly as a street urchin than any might suppose. Her sympathy for her followers was hard won. In a moment of cruel sport, Christa was captured by the Shapechangers. As they toyed with her, she was infected with lycanthropy, becoming a wererat. Luckily, she escaped.

As it turned out, her charisma in rat form was no less than that as a human. Christa soon had her revenge. By the thousands, rats devoured the Shapechangers till they were no more.

Ashamed of her infection, Christa does not use her power over rats, though she is not unaware of the power camprats and vapor rats would give her. To date, she has only used her ability once since destroying the Shapechangers. When Org Nenshen sent assassins to *remove* the new Beggarmistress, she responded instinctively by calling for help. The assassins' bones were picked clean.

Any threat to Christa may met with similar *resistance*.

People of the Book

Org Nenshen's discovery of The Book has not resulted in his immediate command of all the knowledge it contains but his knowledge is growing. Always a practical man, Org has concentrated on mastering simple principles first, the more useful the better.

Slow Shadows are among the creatures spoken of in The Book as well as their summoning. A relatively simple procedure, Org has employed it to ward the Thieves' Guild. Slow Shadows now guard the confines of the Guildhall and act as Org's spies. The shadow that has fallen over the Guildhall is literal as well as figurative.

The Book has also revealed to Org the existence of an ancient race known as the Loquari or Skulks. Org has sent emissaries to the ruins they are said to inhabit to seek an alliance. Org wishes to bring them to Greyhawk as thieves, their natural abilities suiting such work. He also hopes to learn from them more of The Book.

Tentamorts

Tentamorts are another of the creatures freed by the Fire. They are now all too common in basements and cellars. Riding homes of unwanted tentamorts has become a cottage industry in Greyhawk among underemployed adventurers.

Wraiths

Wraiths are a common type of undead throughout the Flaneass. So many wars have washed over the land

that it is difficult to find so isolated a setting that someone has not been killed only to rise as a wraith. The area surrounding Greyhawk is no different. Many wraiths are so well known to haunt certain areas, usually avoided, that they have been given nicknames by the villagers living in those areas.

Of late, the Old Bens and Spindly Shanks have been in something of an uproar. Sightings have become increasingly common but oddly no attacks have been reported, neither has anyone much gone missing. Clerical attempts to turn the irate spirits have been marked by a seeming willingness on the part of the wraith to be turned to stand still for it. In fact, the wraiths seem calmed by the presence of the clerics. Turning has proven easy. Too easy some would say.

QSamantha

EHLONNIC MYSTERY CULTS

By Chaos28

Subj: Ehlonnic Mystery Cults

Date: 95-09-30 14:46:34 EST

From: Chaos28

What follows is from my own campaign, and is not presented as fact (even to my own players), but rather as one avenue for adding history and depth beyond what is presented in the boxworlds and supplements.

A note of explanation: I have been a fan of Robert Graves' mythography since I first picked up his books, and I have always thought that his approach made for wonderful material for gaming. The following accounts and ideas liberally borrow from Graves' style. I know that the style is much more in keeping with modern mythography than with medieval scholarship, but I decided to use it anyway, since it is also more useful to me.

Here we go...

Prehistory

At one time in the dim past, there was no true Oeridian pantheon as we now know it. Instead, most of the tribes worshipped some incarnation of a Universal Goddess who created everything via parthenogenesis or sheer force of will. According to some scholars, the neighboring tribes of the Baklunish also recognized this goddess figure, and adapted her Oeridian name, Ashtis, to their own language as Istus. During this time, most of the tribes of the Oeridians were matriarchal and matrilineal. There exists no evidence that fatherhood was honored, and in fact, no evidence that people fully understood the role of the father in procreation. The chief beliefs were that Ashtis created children either through the same mechanism by which she gave inspiration and insight, or by setting the souls of children adrift on the winds. Women who wished to avoid pregnancy kept themselves indoors, out of the wind, and this seemed to work. Men in these tribes held subordinate but important positions and builders and even hunters.

Over time, there emerged certain patriarchal but still matrilineal cults which sought to divide the figure of Ashtis into different beings, many or most of them male. The cults of Zilchus, Procan, and Velnius Skyfather were chief among these cults. Velnius' cult was the most belligerent of the three patriarchal cults, but it was the less bellicose cult of Zilchus which was most effective in spreading its influence in the matriarchal societies of the time. Zilchus' priests tended to work within the existing structures, trading ideas and spreading their faith by integrating with the populace and slowly introducing their faith as though it had always been a part of the existing belief structure. It is from the cults of Zilchus, by the way, that we get the practice of coining precious metals for exchange, although the cults of Ashtis had long been using gold in barter and for adornment.

It is here that our understanding of the prehistoric emergence of the Oeridian faith becomes clouded. Some maintain that there was a time of great wars, during which the cults fought for primacy across the land. Others suggest that the introduction of Zilchite trade practices caused an indolence in the land, as people turned from art and knowledge toward acquisitiveness and trade. This latter course seems doubtful, however, given the Zilchite practice of keeping fulsome records on the tiniest details. At any rate, we refer to this obscure period for our purposes as the Dark Time.

At some point during this Dark Time, most scholars agree that the Oeridian people shifted from a matriarchal to a patriarchal form of government. While there exists no account to suggest that this change was violent or abrupt, it did leave its mark on the Oeridian faiths. It was, in fact, around this time that the Ehlonnic mystery cults emerged, or at least became known, for it is in the Mount Theresgis Tablet that we first note references to the oracular divination which has become associated with mystery cults even to this day. The tablet provides a clear account of an Ehlonnic ritual in progress (and from this comes the conclusion that the historian of the Theresgis tablets was female). We are shown the sacrifice of the goat, the consuming of the pine nut, the display of the bough, and the etching of the circles. What the tablet's author does not tell us, however, is why these practices were so obscure and mystical.

There may well have been many more mystery cults than have survived to this day, but only a handful still remain to us, including the cults of the Four Winds (Altroa, Wenta, Telchur, and Sotillion) and the mother-cult of Ehlonna. All practice oracular divination and pass on knowledge and the mysteries via oral tradition, quite apart from the cult of Zilchus, for instance, which insists upon the written word as the purest form of communication.

Of the mystery cults, only Telchur's is patriarchal, although evidence exists to suggest that this was not always the case. The wearing of full beards by Telchite priests is a relatively new innovation, less than a century old, and the animal skins donned by the oracle are similarly more in keeping with the theory that the Telchites mixed with Baklunish tribesmen and the Chakyiks and adopted some of their practices. In fact, one of the most striking pieces of evidence to support the matriarchal origins of the Telchite cults comes down in a report delivered to Dey Hasm the Unvanquishable by one of his scouts, wherein the scout reports his encounter with a Telchite cult. The author of

this report assumes a certain familiarity on Dey Hasm's part with the cultists, but he also clearly refers to the cult leader by using a word which approximates in Common to "the masculine priestess." Whether this means that the Telchite ruler was a masculine woman, or a man in the garb of a priestess is unclear, but either way, a case may be made for feminine origins of the cult. Similarly, some of the artifacts discovered by civilized Baklunish along the northern sea coasts have included golden jewelry previously associated with the cults of Wenta and Sotillion, and derived from ancient feminine adornment favored by Oeridian priestesses. It is unfortunate that the ravaging Chakyik tribes have destroyed so many sites of former Telchite worship.

Myth

The creation stories of the ancient Oeridians have diverged and reconverged so many times that it is impossible to say which is true, or even which is first. What is known in the case of the mystery cults is that the oracular practices stem from the cult of Ehlonna the Eternal Huntress, and that the uniform secrecy and mystery associated with the cults of Ehlonna and the Four Winds suggests that the cults are linked at some point in the past.

Here we reach one of the most vexing problems of scholarship, in that there are two distinct myths involving the creation of the Four Winds and their cults. The myths are the Ehlonnic and the Procean, and it is worthwhile to our discussion to examine them both here rather than make a choice between them.

The Ehlonnic myth is not available to us in full detail, but from what is known, we can conclude that there existed a sort of sisterhood of goddesses (the myth makes no allowance for the masculine gender of Telchur) and that these sisters met in secret places to share information and to determine the destiny of mortals, nature, and the seasons. This latter part seems to square with the Ashtis cult's similarities to the Baklunish Istus, since it is believed that the Ehlonnics emerged from the universal faith of Ashtis. The nature of the sister-goddesses' meetings is unknown, but it is widely agreed that they were more pragmatic than the patriarchal cults, concerned more with the well-being and comfort of their followers than with power and the domination of other cults. In the face of emergent cults such as the Zilchites, the Proceans, and the later Pholtics, it is no surprise that the mystery cults kept to hidden places.

The Procean myth is pantheistic in nature (and is, in fact, among the earliest pantheistic stories to emerge from Oeridian culture), and speaks of the fathering of the Four Winds upon Ehlonna the Huntress by Procan. In this myth, Ehlonna has been chosen to wife by Velnius Skyfather, and while the weather god is away creating a storm, Procan comes to Ehlonna and the two share a moment of intimacy which leads to the births of the Four Winds, Altrao, Wenta, Sotillion, and Telchur. Fearful for her children's safety, Ehlonna disguises them all as young suppliant priestesses of her faith and thus avoids Velnius' suspicion. This works for many years, until Telchur, upon coming of age, rebels against his mother, ashamed perhaps at having grown up as a girl. He betrays his mother and sisters to Velnius on the condition that he be spared the weather god's wrath. Velnius rampages, hurling his children to the four corners of Oerth. Despite his promise, he even seeks out Telchur, who avoids him by hiding in a cave of ice and covering himself with snow. This, say the Proceans, is why the North Wind is always so cold and why it blows only bitter tidings to nature, causing the flora and fauna to hide.

The Procean myth mirrors the development of the Oeridian pantheon in a number of ways. The cult of Velnius did in fact drop in importance, losing many of its worshippers to defection to other cults. The priests of Procan may have circulated the above myth in order to accomplish two ends. First, they reduced Velnius to the status of a cuckolded tyrant and thus undercut his following. Second, by linking their cult with that of the Ehlonnics, they may have sought to lay claim to the Ehlonnic faith, adding it and intertwining it with their own. Judging from the current state of the Oeridian pantheon, they seem to have been largely successful.

History

Although much of what took place in the formative stages of the Oeridian pantheon is shrouded in mystery and misunderstanding, the rise of the Zilchites, with their surprisingly advanced written language, has given us some clues. We can look at such works as the Fivefold Scroll of Thenix, and obtain some insights. However, it should be recalled that the Zilchites were cultists in their own right, and a certain bias on the part of Zilchite historians may be presupposed. Also, the old adage that "history is written by the victor" deserves some credit in this case.

For the purposes of our discussion, we have chosen to examine Phenophelos' *Migrations of the Oeridian People*. In his earliest chapters, he makes reference to older texts now lost to us, so what he says cannot be confirmed firsthand, though it is compelling in light of what we have already discussed.

Although Phenophelos does not describe the rise of the mystery cults, he does give us some insight into their dispersal. Most remarkably, he treats on the conflict between the Ehlonnics of Queen Tserxis and the Velnian general Leops of Keraks. Tserxis's people occupied the lower valley just north of the Crystalmists, and were apparently famed for producing healthy goats and for growing herbs and vegetables which were at once more

prodigious and more flavorful than those of surrounding lands. This agrees with what we know of the agricultural mysteries of the cults of Wenta. Tserxis' people may have been Wentans.

Per Phenophelos, General Leops had been fighting a long and costly war with the neighboring cult of Zilchus and he saw the capture of Tserxis' valley as a convenient way to restock his larders and continue his war. Tserxis' army was small, but Leops knew that the soldiers were accomplished in ambush and trap-setting, as most of the Ehlonnics were. Leops did not wish to risk still more troops in this campaign, so he sought out and found a confederate to aid him. His messengers made contact with what Phenophelos calls "the shy power of the caves." The word for "shy" is given a feminine connotation, and the word "power" is conjugated in the masculine. Together with the fact that Telchites still hold their auguries in caves, and the facts of the ensuing campaign, it is widely held that Leops contacted a cult of Telchur.

Leops fought a winter campaign against the Ehlonnics with the magical aid of the Phenophelos' "shy power." The Ehlonnics were routed and driven off, but at a tremendous cost to Leops' cause. The fields were ruined by the frost and the battle, and little was left for Leops to take back with him to Keraks. Leops himself died of a raging fever early the next spring, and the Zilchites took and occupied Keraks.

About the migrations of the Ehlonnics who fled the valley, nothing is known factually, but it bears mentioning that legends in Lopolla today speak of a Sisterhood of Xerzis which occasionally acts against corrupt nobles and slavers in the region. This may suggest that Tserxis' legacy did not die in the loss of her people's homeland.

Mystery Cults Today

The surviving mystery cults of the ancient Oeridian matriarchies are run today much as they might have been hundreds of years ago, with the exception of the open church faith of Ehlonna the Huntress. Ehlonna's faith has divided into the mystery faith and the church faith, but there is not evidence that the two are in conflict with one another. In fact, only a few followers of Ehlonna in the churches are even aware of the continued existence of the mystery cult which bears their goddess' name.

Recent accounts of mystery cults in the Great Kingdom may be fabrications, but they point to organizations which employ hit-and-run tactics and hold clandestine meetings, opposing such social structures as slavery and tyranny. These cults seem to employ a structure composed of cells to limit the damage which can be done by captured members who are forced to divulge information, and they seem to employ women in leadership roles.

All in all, however, it is doubtful that the world will ever see a full-fledged re-emergence of the mystery cult phenomenon, since the degree of tolerance and cooperation among the established religions, both in and out of the Oeridian faith, has changed drastically over the centuries. The few remaining mystery cults remain hidden not so much out of fear of persecution and conquest, but out of a sense of tradition and right worship.

Subj: Mystery Cults Footnote
From: Chaos28
Whew...

Date: 95-09-30 16:02:07 EST

I had to condense the daylight out of those posts just to get them up here. I would welcome any and all comments which are given in a friendly manner, and I would enjoy seeing what others have done with the forgotten religions of Greyhawk, and perhaps Greyhawk's prehistory.

Chaos

Subj: It's a mystery
From: Psychlops
Chaos,

Date: 95-09-30 23:49:12 EST

I don't know quite what to make of your Oeridian mysteries. As presented, they don't seem to affect the campaign setting or the game. MB asks what the followers of Ehlonna do. I would like to know how the mystery cult serves the goddess' interests, and if these are interests that are not addressed by her clerics and druids. Mystery cults must serve some purpose or fulfill some function in order to have a place in Greyhawk. They need to be presented in an AD&D framework, otherwise they're just vague concepts.

The specifics that were presented in these proto-Oeridian myths do not jibe particularly well with Greyhawk history. There is no reason to believe that the Oerid, or proto-Oerid, were older than the Baklunish whose calendar predates the Oeridian by more than 2,000 years. If the proto-Oeridians worshipped some hypothetical Universal Goddess, it is far more likely that they adopted her from their Baklunish neighbors. They would have been greatly influenced by the civilizations that they bordered, both the Suloise and the Baklunish. Actually, I would suggest that

the Oerid, as a nation, were produced by the collision of these two cultures. Their mythology would reflect this conflict.

There is also nothing to support an Oeridian genesis for Ehlonna. She is a deity of the central Flanaess, with both druidic and clerical priesthoods. Perhaps her druids follow a more mystical path than her clerics, but this may simply be a function of druidic philosophy rather than Ehlonna history. She seems to be more closely related to the elvish cultures than any one ethnic group of humanity. She may well be the matron of a half-elven society that once flourished in the Flanaess. Though that culture was lost during the Migration period, something of it is still preserved in the society of the Rangers found in the central Flanaess.

Perhaps the "mythographic" style of the late Robert Graves is not the most effective one for the presentation of game material. Try to take a less all-encompassing stance. Explain, in game terms, how mystery cults differ from the other forms of worship. Are there different levels of Initiation? What are the benefits and detriments of cult membership? How do the deities view these cults? How do these cults view the deities? What are their goals, and who can join? Answering some of these questions will make mystery cults both more substantial and more accessible. Then the mythic background can be utilized much more fully in the campaign.

Just a thought,
Psychlops

Subj: Re:Ehlonnian Mystery Cults IV Date: 95-10-01 04:48:36 EST
From: Chaos28
MB,

Give me a little time to collect some more feedback, and I'll try to address all the questions in one posting. Good questions, BTW. My versions of Ehlonna and the Four Winds will probably differ from those of other folks here, and I'd like to see the reaction before I delve further.

Chaos

Subj: Re:Ehlonnian Mystery Cults Date: 95-10-01 14:58:25 EST
From: Sabretore

I think the Mystery Cult background is interesting. As written, it can add detail to the worship of Ehlonna. However, the cultic specifics appear to be left to the DM. This may be intentional?

I am not so concerned about how this all meshes into the overall cosmology or culture of the Flanaess. The background is interesting in and of itself and is sufficient.

More detail is always good but as with other presentations by other posters, I get the idea and given the medium that is sufficient.

I see Ehlonna as more of a nature deity than presented and that would limit my use of this material. Similarly, I see a mystery cult as somewhat more mysterious and with a clearer purpose than that presented.

Ehlonna is a puzzling deity because of the elven/half-elven/druidic associations piled on top of her nature portfolio and her inclusion in a human pantheon. (Ever notice how demi-humans always worship the same pantheon in every setting but not humans?). I think I would need to sort out these mixed associations before proceeding into further detail. In this, Chaos may be ahead of me. Good postings.

Cheers:)
Sabretore

Subj: Mystery Cults Date: 95-10-02 02:14:42 EST
From: Chaos28

Just to answer a few of the questions so far...

I took the mystery cults from proto-Hellenic mythology. The cults were kind of like the druidic cults of western Europe in that they represented both spiritual and secular power. The ancient druids were a powerful lot, and the proto-Hellenic cults likewise commanded respect and steered their respective societies. The initiation into deeper and deeper mysteries fits perfectly well into the RPG atmosphere when one considers higher and higher levels of spell-casting power on behalf of clerics and druids, and when one considers that not every religion is going to want to let its raw acolytes determine doctrine. I used this proto-Hellenic model with the Oeridians because I see the Oeridians as somewhat Greek in flavor. I therefore used the practice of oracular divination and the formation of the pantheon from cults, just as we find in early Greek mythology.

As to the specifics not jibing with GH history (Psychlops), I don't see why they can't. I did notice that when I was condensing my notes into posts, I might have mistakenly indicated that the Baklunish adopted Istus from the

Oeridians. You pointed this out, I think. In my own notes, I mention only that the two peoples seem to have worshipped the same Universal Goddess. As a matter of fact, my notes also make mention of the tripartite Fate of the Oeridians (a blending of the three-faced Muse, and the characters of Clotho, Lachesis, and Atrophos) as being not a true goddess, but rather three misinterpretations of Ashtis which reconverged as a being who was three, and yet one, goddess. As for the timeline and calendars, I use those rather selectively. In the case of the Suel being older than the elves, I favor the timeline. In the case of the Oeridians, I choose rather to say that they adopted a new calendar when the tribes united under a single chieftain. After that chieftain lost control, the peoples fragmented again, but kept the same calendar.

Psychlops: There are indeed different levels of initiation, and the granted powers of the goddesses and god vary with the cult and the level of initiation. As for the clerics and druids, these cults *are* the clerics and druids. I am not inventing new classes, just giving background to the faiths of priests of these deities. The goals of these faiths, just like the goals of most faiths, depend largely upon the outlook of the priests, within reason. Sotillion's cultists seek to live a life of ease, while Telchur's seem obsessed with revenge on the other mystery cults and other seemingly fruitless goals.

Who can join? I suppose that is one thing I should have gone into more depth on. Most of the cults are feminine mystery cults, and only women can figure in the priesthood. Telchur's cult is one exception in that it is more hermetic, allowing only men into its ranks. Ehlonna's faith, as the most robust of the five, has graduated into a "modern" religion and embraces anyone who truly wishes to learn the ways of nature and woodcraft. It should be noted, however, that there are splinter groups of Ehlonnics who allow only women in, just as there exists a splinter group which caters only to elves (this one I placed in Celene, and they resist human encroachment on the elven wildlands).

The chief characteristics of the mystery cults are oracular and oral traditions, and secrecy. This is what distinguishes them from more open and contemporary faiths. They are more like secret societies than religions as the folk of the Central Flanaess know them. Nor are they all unified (shades of the Harpers of FR), but often act against one another if the situation demands such behavior.

Chaos

Subj: Delve! (Psychlops)

Date: 95-10-02 03:08:54 EST

From: Chaos28

Psychlops,

I was already looking at condensing six typed pages of player handouts and about ten pages of the most cryptic scribbles you ever saw outside a doctor's office into something useful to online folk. I had to make a choice whether to present gaming statistics with little background or background with no gaming statistics. Since other folks here have proven themselves to be good system-builders, I went with the background. I still had to leave a lot out, but most of it, I just couldn't think how to present in an intelligible way to folks who don't know my style of gaming.

Anyway, here's a very brief outline of the "granted powers" of the Four Winds cults, available at whatever level the DM decides is appropriate (I don't usually use specialty priests and am only now beginning to bleed them back into my game after a fiasco with FR)...

Sotillion -- As the Wind which brings ease and comfort, Sotillion presides over curative magics and ease of pain, as well as creature comforts. As granted powers, Sotillion's priestesses can almost always find enough to eat and drink in their surroundings, and ample shade and shelter in harsh weather. In the summertime, their curative magics always function at maximum efficiency, and at higher levels this holds true year-round. Also, Sotillion's priestesses can dispel confusion, cure disease, and remove insanity as a priest two levels higher. Note: I mention the cure disease thing because in my game, diseases have levels, and a priest cures them the same way he Dispel Magic.

Wenta -- The Harvest Wind is the bringer of bounty and the messenger of wisdom. Her priestesses can enter the cult at any age, but can only perform as high priestesses upon reaching the chronological age of 50 years. There are no young high priestesses of Wenta. Her priestesses can increase the yields of crops, breed more resilient strains of grain and other plant foods (to combat frost and blight), and keep pests away from crops without resorting to short-term spells. Priestesses of Wenta are also granted a sort of "intuitive sense" which allows them to fine-tune their spells, which amounts to granting a +1 or -1 (whichever is beneficial to the priestess) for every three levels of the priestess. Thus, a Wentan trying to mend a broken leg (Cure Serious Wounds spell) would *add* her bonuses to the amount of healing which takes place, while a Wentan trying to Charm an angry bear would subtract the number

from the animal's saving throw.

Altroia -- The East Wind is the wind which signals fertility. The springtime is when plants bloom and creatures begin their mating cycles. Altroia's priestesses are usually young (although Altroia never abandons her faithful, she does seem to delight in youth more than the other Winds), and can resist unnatural aging effects (they age only half the stated amount, or none at all if a save is allowed; and in situations where saves are not allowed, they gain one at '20', with the attendant modifiers as described). As a rather hebephrenic lot, Altroians suffer a -2 to all Wisdom checks, but this does not effect spell capacity, spell failure, or magical saves, only decision-making, as they tend to be somewhat impulsive and brash. They can also increase the likelihood of pregnancy in animals and in people (if such is desired, and it usually is in their communities) by 5% per level of the priestess.

Telchur -- The North Wind blows bitterness and loss from his cave of ice. His priests seem to be immune to the effects of normal cold (down to 20 degrees F.) and gain a +1 on saves against cold-based spells for every 3 levels they achieve. Also, upon entering the upper levels, the Telchites can withstand even the soul-chilling touch of Negative Plane creatures (no damage from the cold effects of such creatures), and they are the only Wind cult which can turn undead, although only Evil priests of Telchur can control undead (about 25% of Telchite initiates are of Evil alignment).

Telchites who master the inner mysteries of the cult can Control Winds at three levels higher than normal, and can cast wizardly cold-based spells as a Wizard of five levels lower. (I give the Telchites more menacing powers because I wouldn't normally allow them as PCs).

This list is not exhaustive, and I'm sure anyone who's gotten this far is probably thinking, "Oh, hey, the Altroians could..." So I'll leave it at the above and let others do the thinking from here.

In my game, I don't like to run spells as just a bunch of die-rolling, anymore than I like the system to surface heavily in anything. Just as I have more or less done away with Reaction Rolls, I have also tried to conceal the number-crunching aspects of magic and faith. What I posted above should not give the impression that I encourage min-maxing among these cults. The mysteries of the cults are spell power, but they are much more than that. They represent oral tradition, and many of the spells are not directly granted by the goddesses or god, but rather performed as rituals or as the outgrowth of secret knowledge.

For instance, the robust strains of plant produced by the Wentans are little more than eugenics and hybridization, as well as advancements in crop rotation, a knowledge of soil nutrients, and so forth. The Sotillines are practiced at medicine. The Altroians are accomplished at prenatal medicine, obstetrics, and animal husbandry. And so forth. The fact that these mysteries are gained through ritual means rather than study of texts is what distinguishes the mystery cults from the scholars of, say, Greyhawk City. A sage whose study is plant biology could probably do many of the day-to-day things that a Wentan does, but he arrives at the knowledge in a different way, and he does not have the divine favor of a goddess to back him up.

The mystery cults employ sacrifice, although whether this sacrifice is animal, plant or mineral, or some other thing, varies with the cult. The earliest Ehlonnics sacrificed goats and wild deer, after the practice of the followers of the mother-cult of Ehlonna. None of the cults -- not even the Telchites, for all their strangeness and bitterness -- engage in human sacrifice. Mystery cults of Ehlonna often sacrifice the finest kill of a sacred hunt (that is, a hunt which is held on a holy day such as Midsummer, or a hunt which is called for by the oracle). Today, most of the cults sacrifice only in the most abstract sense, by burning herbs which are associated with something which is desired. Burning one type of herb might aid memory, for instance, while another type might dispel memories (as in the case of a Sotilline trying to ease the mind of a person who has witnessed a gruesome act).

Some of the trappings are almost universal. All of the cults induce trance to aid in divination. The eldest and wisest of the priestesses (or priest, in the case of the Telchites) is the Oracle, and has final say in all civic matters as well as interpreting the will of the deity. All but the cult of Telchur display some form of circular diagram on the floor of the temple. All but the Telchites employ a forked bough (Olive is sacred to Altroia, Ash to Sotillion, and Elm to Wenta) to inscribe the ritual circles. The Telchites employ a straight pine bough and their designs are usually haphazard, often representing animals and landscapes. The Telchites use egg whites to stiffen their hair and beards during ritual, while the other cults consume fruits or pine nuts.

Well, that's enough for now. You get the picture.

Chaos

PANTHEONS OF THE FLANAESS: THE UNKNOWN GODS

By Sabretore.

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Unknown)

Date: 95-10-02 11:24:02 EST

From: Sabretore

The question of the World of Greyhawk's cosmology is an interesting one. Every deity is given a cultural origin, even if only unknown. Many deities are both specific to a culture and common. It seems obvious that these deities have a cultural affinity but have gained a greater currency. For this reason, they should be grouped with their cultural fellows. In so doing, we create a group of strictly common deities and a group of mixed common deities, as well. To a very lesser extent the same can be said for unknown or indeterminate deities. Let us begin there.

There are only three deities of unknown origin:

Tharizdun,GG - U (Eternal Darkness, Decay) E m

Ulaa,GG - UC (Hills, Mountains, Gemstones) LG f

Was tri,DG - U (Bigotry, Amphibians) LN(E) m

Looking at these three deities, they have nothing in common. There is no indication of any commonalties. Truly, they appear united only by their indeterminate origin.

Sabretore

PANTHEONS OF THE FLANAESS: THE FLAN

By Sabretore, MB Drapier, Aria13, Chaos28, & QSamantha.

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Flan)

Date: 95-10-02 11:27:41 EST

From: Sabretore

The Flanish deities are relatively few:

Beory,GG - FC (Oerth Mother, Nature, Rain) N f
Nerull,GG - FC (Death, Darkness, Underworld) NE m
Pelor,GG - FC (Sun, Strength, Light, Healing) NG m
Rao,GG - FC (Peace, Reason, Serenity) LG m
Allitur,LG - FC (Ethics, Propriety) LG(N) m
Berei,LG - FC (Home, Family, Agriculture) NG f
Obad-hai,LG - FC (Nature, Wildlands, Freedom,, Hunting) N m
Zodal,LG - FC (Mercy, Hope, Benevolence) NG m
Iuz,DG - FC (Oppression, Deceit, Pain) CE(N) m

The thing that immediately strikes one about the Flan pantheon is that it is clearly a pantheon, very nature based and pacifistic. All of the deities have a near elemental cast. Allitur is perhaps the most interesting because he falls outside this categorization. However, if we see him as the enforcer of taboos, he fits the image of an agrarian pantheon.

Indeed, the Flan hardly ruled the Flaneass prior to the migrations. While there is evidence of highly developed ancient Flannish civilizations, at the time of the migrations, they were a very primitive, though peaceful, people. Like all such peoples, they were overrun and conquered. The pantheon fits.

Interestingly, all Flan deities are also common. The Flan seem to have won hearts and minds, even as they lost the continent.

An interesting note is Iuz' role in the Flaneass seen through Flan eyes. As a god of oppression, his current role is understandable but he might be responsible for the migrations as well.

Sabretore

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Flan)

Date: 95-10-02 15:55:22 EST

From: MB Drapier

The Flan pantheon should probably be divided into the primitive nature gods like Obad-Hai (who is a lot like the Greek Pan in nature and orientation), and the gods of a settled, agrarian community concerned with the hearth and home (Berei, Allitur, etc).

There is another problem--the conception of the Flan as a peaceful agrarian people on the one hand, and tough warriors of a Celtic or Amerindian sort on the other. Problem one--how do you square Celtic myth with Amerindian myth? Problem two--how do you then bring both into line with the sort of pre-Celtic, "Old European" style mythology of the hearth and the Oerth Mother? We will have to return to this one.

MB

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Flan)

Date: 95-10-02 19:12:16 EST

Aria13

I actually don't have much of a problem with Celtic Indians. I think the Flan closer to Celts when they become urban and more Indian in wilderness areas.

Beory (Oerth Mother, Nature, Rain) is the Oerth Mother to Pelor's (Sun, Strength, Light, Healing) Sky Father. With Oerth and Sky in harmony, Rao (Peace, Reason, Serenity) is the son of Pelor and Beory. Nerull (Death, Darkness, Underworld) is Pelor's polar opposite and his great rival for Beory's affections.

Berei (Home, Family, Agriculture) and Obad-hai (Nature, Wildlands, Freedom,, Hunting) would seem fraternal twins, representing a lesser incarnation of Pelor and Beory. Allitur (Ethics, Propriety) and Zodal (Mercy, Hope, Benevolence) both appear as aspects of Rao.

Iuz (Oppression, Deceit, Pain) is more clearly of Nerull, yet we know his origin. This suggests to me that the Flan existed in an Eden state, until the coming of Iuz. Prior to that, there was no warfare. In the aftermath of Iuz' rise to demi-god status Pelor (strength) and Nerull (death) might well become the Flan war gods.

Warriors dedicated to Pelor would be those akin to Indians, I'm thinking particularly of American Indian

ceremonies like the Sun Dog Ceremony of initiation and the Wardog societies. Warriors dedicated to Nerull would be more Celtic, a bloodier people all told. The two groups would be terrible rivals but together form the Flan fighting forces arrayed against the infernal Iuz.

Aria13

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Flan)
Chaos28

Date: 95-10-03 02:14:41 EST

Aria: <<Iuz (Oppression, Deceit, Pain) is more clearly of Nerull, yet we know his origin. This suggests to me that the Flan existed in an Eden state, until the coming of Iuz. Prior to that, there was no warfare. In the aftermath of Iuz' rise to demi-god status Pelor (strength) and Nerull (death) might well become the Flan war gods.>>

Good point. Iuz is perhaps the most diabolic figure in GH, at least in a Miltonic and biblical sense. For more modern horror (Lovecraft and beyond), we would be better off with Tharizdun. The notion that the devil in the garden of Eden happened to plague the most nature-loving people is an intriguing conundrum. For the purposes of my game, it's like saying that Satan was a Native American. This brings up some fascinating possibilities. Now why didn't I think of that? Cults of Iuz as Skinwalkers is just too good to pass up.

Chaos

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Flan)
QSamantha

Date: 95-10-03 09:53:02 EST

I don't have too much trouble with Celtic Amerinds. It's like peanut butter and chocolate - Two great tastes that taste great together. An excellent examination of the Flan pantheon, Aria.

QSamantha

PANTHEONS OF THE FLANAESS: THE BAKLUNI

By Sabretore, Aria13, Chaos28, & QSamantha.

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Baklunish)

Date: 95-10-02 11:25:26 EST

From: Sabretore

Somewhat surprisingly, there are only four Baklunish deities:

Istus,GG - B (Fate, Destiny) N f

Geshtai,LG - BC (Lakes, Rivers, Wells) N f

Xan Yae,LG -BC (Twilight, Shadows, Stealth, Mind over Matter) N f

Zuoken,DG - BC (Physical and Mental Mastery) N m

Looking at their alignment all are Neutral. All but Zuoken are female. Only Istus is exclusively Baklunish, the other three having become commonly worshipped.

The portfolios are not immediately complementary. Zuoken is clearly aligned with Xan Yae with respect to the powers of the mind. But Xan Yae's portfolio is much broader, including not merely varying degrees of half-light but also stealth. A complicated deity to say the least. Taken together the three female deities have portfolios that are not related in any discernible fashion. This suggests that these deities are but a small part of a larger Baklunish pantheon.

The only alternative interpretation would be that the particular areas of these goddesses' interest were of special importance to the Baklunish. If that is so, their neutrality and femininity say something very interesting about Baklunish culture.

Solving this puzzle is no easy matter. The Migrations are a strong reason to believe that these deities are all that was carried away from a larger pantheon. The followers of these goddesses escaped OR these goddesses were of particular importance to those migrating.

On the other hand, one might readily imagine that fate was the primary concern of the Baklunish, living in a harsh land and that similarly, life giving sources of fresh water would be important. This would explain Istus and Geshtai. Xan Yae and Zuoken would seem to clearly indicate that the Baklunish might have a natural propensity toward psionics.

The neutrality of the deities would suggest a similar Baklunish outlook, not at all surprising if Istus, the embodiment of fate is indeed the primary deity.

That all of the true deities are female could suggest that women play a dominant role in Baklunish society OR that stereotypically, fate is capricious - like a woman - with a like logic carrying over to life giving sources of fresh water and mental powers, that while not uncommon are not universal.

Ultimately, there is no sure way to decide whether these deities are the entirety of the Baklunish pantheon or only the barest part.

I tend to favor the idea that these deities comprise the entire pantheon, if only because this seems clearly the case considering the other deities.

Sabretore

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Baklunish)

Date: 95-10-02 19:17:02 EST

Aria13

I agree. There need to be more Baklunish deities. Four, even interesting ones, does not a pantheon make.

Aria13

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Baklunish)

Date: 95-10-03 01:58:14 EST

Chaos28

MB,

Precisely why I decided to transplant the Al-Qadim gods into the Baklunish culture. The Al-Q setting is terrific and I think it was a terrible waste when it was cancelled, so I adopted much of what I loved about the setting into WoG. The gods, both the gods of the Pantheon and the small, idolatrous cults, survive in my Baklunish cultures. I think it fits the Arabic flavor of the Baklunish quite nicely, and it also fleshes out the pantheon without requiring a lot of gruntwork.

Chaos

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Baklunish)

Date: 95-10-03 09:50:19 EST

Qsamantha

Using the AQ gods to fill out the Baklunish pantheon is a good idea, which I never really have considered.

But Istus becomes Fate? I shudder to think we are going to get into that Fate/Entropy thing the FRites were drooling over. A stupid idea whose time had come. Avoiding that, I'm all for using the AQ deities.

Qsamantha

PANTHEONS OF THE FLANAESS: THE SUEL

By Sabretore, Aria13, MB Drapier, Chaos28, & QSamantha.

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Suel)

Date: 95-10-02 11:26:34 EST

From: Sabretore

The gods of Suel origin are much more extensive:

Kord,GG - S (Athletics, Sports, Brawling) CG m
Lendor,GG - S (Time, Tedium) LN m
Wee Jas,GG - S (Magic, Death) LN f
Beltar,LG - S (Malice, Pits, Deep Caves) CE(N) f
Bralm,LG - SC (Insects, Industriousness) N(L) f
Fortubo,LG - S (Stone, Metals, Mountains) LG(N) m
Llerg,LG - S (Beasts, Strength) CN m
Lydia,LG - SC (Music, Knowledge, Daylight) NG f
Norebo,LG - S (Luck, Gambling, Risk) CN m
Phaulkon,LG - S (Air, Winds, Clouds) CG m
Phyton,LG - S (Beauty, Nature) CG m
Pyremius,LG - S (Fire Poison, Murder) NE m
Syrul,LG - S (Deceit, False Promises, Lies) CE(I) f
Xerbo,LG - S (Sea, Water Travel, Money, Business) N m

Fourteen deities, of which only Lydia and Bralm have become common. The rest are strictly Suel. The Greater Gods would seem to indicate the chief Suel preoccupations - Sports and Magic. Lendor's presence is more problematic, save as a Creator figure. The Lesser Gods clearly show a duality. There are at once gods that bespeak of a high civilization but also a wicked one. Similarly, the Suel nature deities evince nature's gentle side but also its fury.

This is much more clearly a complete pantheon. One might imagine a few more deities but hardly more than a half dozen. That so many Suel gods are known but so few Baklunish is strange, particularly given the reputation of the Suel for cruelty.

Sabretore

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Suel)

Date: 95-10-02 19:11:09 EST

Aria13

Oh. I'm not so sure MB. I really liked Len's work on the Suel pantheon but I think there is much more to be said.

We know the Suel are cruel. That Kord, God of Sports, is a major deity might suggest that the Suel were into blood sports. That's not written anywhere but I think it makes sense.

Similarly, given the Suel mindset (and of course we speak of Suel generally) I think Wee Jas is a goddess of Necromancy. Not only does it fit a Suel mindset but portfolio's of death and magic suggest it as well. Again, this is not written and Len doesn't even follow up on the associations. But to each their own.

Beltar, (Malice, Pits, Deep Caves), Bralm, (Insects, Industriousness), Fortubo, (Stone, Metals, Mountains), Llerg, (Beasts, Strength), Phaulkon, (Air, Winds, Clouds) and Phyton, (Beauty, Nature), all seem to be nature deities.

Lydia, (Music, Knowledge, Daylight), Norebo, (Luck, Gambling, Risk), Pyremius, (Fire Poison, Murder), Syrul, (Deceit, False Promises, Lies) and Xerbo, (Sea, Water Travel, Money, Business) all seem to be civilizing deities.

Lendor, I think, is the key to understanding the pantheon. That the Suel would so revere time says to me that they had a very long lasting empire. That is to point out the obvious but what isn't so obvious is that this could well be the genesis of their racism. They simply could find no one else who could compare.

The picture that emerges is of a state that regards itself as the epitome of culture, possibly with god-kings who practice necromancy or a priesthood which does, and a love of blood sports. While refined, the Suel appear to be extremely ruthless in their dealings. Trickery and violence is the preferred means of getting ahead. Nature is regarded as something to be harnessed and exploited, though it is appreciated for its bounty.

I draw this from the deities and I could go on but I think you see my point. Merely describing and stating out the gods does not end the discussion of the deities.

Aria13

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Suel)
MB Drapier
Aria,

Date: 95-10-02 20:16:08 EST

Yes, you're right. There probably is a bit more that can be done with this one. I wonder myself whether this pantheon represents all of the gods worshipped by the Suel, or just those taken up by those Suel who were fleeing the wars.

I agree that Lendor is the key to the pantheon--he is the god who has, I believe, helped his people escape the final destruction of the Suel Imperium. One is reminded of The Aeneid here.

I wonder if Lendor was not a neglected god during the final years of the empire -- prophets proclaiming the general doom, but all ignored. Had the Suel begun to think that they were greater than the gods, a la Nimrod or the Numenorian folk of Tolkien? Or had they turned to evil, and the worship of the lords of the Abyss?

What about the differences between the Suel of the north and those to the south? Evidently, the Scarlet Brotherhood is very different in character from the so-called barbarian states. And if the Brotherhood is indeed devoted to the resurrection of the One Who Must Sleep Forever, then how do we square that with the relative simplicity of the folk of Kord?

Do we have a society that is sharply divided between the cultish practices of its magic-using class and the simple barbarism of the warriors? Perhaps the folk of Kord were originally a slave class, or a class of gladiators. Would they have known the peoples of Fortubo?

Then there is Kord's father, Phaulkon, a chaotic good god of warrior/rangers, who strikes me as imperial in character (Len suggests that Phaulkon is honored in Keoland, and he may be useful as a Keoish national deity). Phaulkon is much more the sort of god who would originate in an urban, imperial culture--a god of good soldiers.

Other gods, like Bralm, sound like they are not native to the Suel pantheon, but add-ons from the conquered tribal peoples of the Suel empire. I would be very surprised if Bralm were not worshipped among some of the Baklunish as well. Beltar sounds like a cult that might develop in the mountain holdings, among the miners who were not devoted to Fortubo (who is himself a god of the common folk, like Kord).

Lendor and Wee Jas would be the leaders of the whole pantheon. But as greater gods, they may have seemed too removed. Perhaps they stopped communicating with their priesthoods when evil cults began to grow in the empire--or perhaps the evil cults grew after these gods had withdrawn. Why did they withdraw? Did they know the Suel Empire was fated to fall? Is it one of those infamous games the gods play with free will?

A picture begins to emerge of this society--highly religious, among the elite of the cities. The people of the cities are cultivated, but grow increasingly hedonistic, less inclined to listen to the gods, who continue to be worshipped in cult fashion. Among the common folk, in the meantime, worship of some of the less subtle gods like Kord begins to grow, further fragmenting the society. In the end, there are a few who still pay heed to Lendor and Wee Jas, more who follow warrior gods like Kord and Phaulkon (but who lack the leadership of the great gods), secret cults of evil deities, especially Tharizdun, and a handful of tribal gods from the provinces.

MB

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Suel)
Chaos28
Aria,

Date: 95-10-03 02:09:26 EST

Good points, all, but I am kinder to the Suel. I consider the Scarlet Brotherhood to be an aberration and I tend to portray the Suel more as Nordic or Prussian. Just as the Vikings were misunderstood by most of their victims (although they were still ravagers, they were hardly evil), so the Suel have been misinterpreted by many whose bloodlines suffered at their hands.

I will speak only of the three majors of the pantheon, Lendor, Wee Jas, and Kord. In my own mythology, Lendor dreamed the universe into being because he didn't like things to be untidy, and he was the first being to exhibit a trait we call curiosity. He wanted to know how many towers there were in the Dreaming City, and when he began to count them, they became numbered for the first time. Lendor represents more than just time and tedium to me. He represents order emerging from chaos. He is, however, somewhat capricious, and easily distracted, so his order cannot be relied upon.

Wee Jas is a goddess of finality. She determines the time at which a person will die, and she creates the magic that is so dangerous (at least to the Suel barbarians, which is where I place the strongest bastion of Suel pantheist worship). She is not a cruel goddess, but neither is she motherly or kind. She simply is, and her worshippers know that they must learn how to avoid displeasing her.

Kord I equate somewhat with R.E. Howard's Crom. Kord is the giver of strength and fortitude, and the tester

of the same. He imbues each life with the strength to carry on, and then tests that strength throughout the being's life, so that his people do not grow complacent. Kord will not help you best your enemies. He might, however, put you in your place if you get too powerful and forget humility. The best way to please Kord is to show him how you make good use of your strength and your survival skills, even if that means at the expense of others. The barbarians raid constantly, and many of their ships carry priests of Kord, who bear witness to displays of strength and survivability, good generalship, good sportsmanship (as the Suel see it), and a lack of fear and cowardice.

Chaos

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Suel)(MB) Date: 95-10-03 02:22:39 EST

Chaos28

MB,

You mentioned Bralm as being possibly external to the pantheon. I second this. The first time I gave serious thought to this bug-goddess of industry, I pictured the Ovions from Battlestar Galactica, and later, when I turned to playing Shadowrun, I thought that the Insect Spirits, with their amoral colonizing instinct and their entirely task-directed styles, as perfect for servitors of Bralm. I still don't know what to make of all this, but I can't seem to make Bralm fit into Suel culture in any reasonable and logical way.

What if Bralm is some dark goddess who was taken up by slavers in early Suel society? But how does that explain why she has become a common goddess? Most people don't care much for bugs or buggy living, even merchants, who can sometimes be pretty insectile ;)

Chaos

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Suel) Date: 95-10-03 09:49:25 EST

Qsamantha

Kord as Crom. I never thought of that but I like the idea. Somehow, Kord has always struck me as a wimp. A huffing, puffing, muscle head. I'm not sure why but I remember that from the first I saw of him in the Dragon, I had this impression. Kord as Crom is a good idea and redeems Kord.

Qsamantha

Subj: Re: Bralm (MB) Date: 95-10-03 23:10:34 EST

Chaos28

MB,

I got the same take as you seem to have, but I sort of drew this odd picture in my head...

I saw the slaves working in the mines sneaking away to a set of caverns where the Mother awaits. They go there for a variety of reasons at first, and many are recruited into the cult by friends and fellow slaves. Bralm draws strength from their numbers and promises them solace in exchange for hard work and obedience. The slavers are perhaps unaware of Bralm's presence, and she certainly protects her secrets as she protects her followers. The safety of the hive is of supreme importance, and that overrides individual wellbeing when it must.

This makes for a cute little puzzle. Bralm is not evil, but order and the completion of tasks, the protection of the hive and its secret, are of paramount importance. If necessary, the hive will sacrifice its own to keep its secrets, like human ants. How much of this behavior is brainwashing, and how much is honest devotion? At what point does this line blur? And what are Bralm's followers doing now?

Here's my take... Bralm's followers are the ones who carved the Lost Passage through the Hellfurnaces. Bralm recognized that her hive could not survive in the homelands it inhabited, and it was getting crowded in the tunnels as guards, overseers, and even slave lords became hive members. Bralm's people moved out into the world with the rest of the migration, and now they are everywhere. The Common aspect of Bralm is not due to a general acceptance of her worship by the urbane, but simply due to the fact that her hivelings are everywhere, in just about every civilized city.

There is no dark, evil plan in Bralm's mind. She is the Hive Mother and she just wants her drones to get on with business as usual. The business of expanding and ordering the Hive is the only business. Nothing inherently Evil about wanting to expand your base of followers. But to a parent who has lost a child to this cult, or to a merchant whose competitor seems *too* connected to compete with, Bralm has sinister implications. This is a cult whose Neutrality does not stand in the way of making it a terrific villain. Part of the fun might be when the PCs try to get a friend or ally away from the cult without killing any of the people in the cult. since there is no outre evil going on here.

Subj: Re: Bralm (Chaos)

Date: 95-10-03 11:10:11 EST

MB Drapier
Chaos,

I picture Bralm as presiding over a highly intricate and lawful society, but one that is essentially turned inward in orientation--a beehive or an anthill.

Possibly Bralm is another god of the Suloise slaves, maybe imported by the overseers in certain labor camps.
MB

PANTHEONS OF THE FLANAESS: THE OERIDI

By Sabretore, Aria13, MB Drapier, & QSamantha.

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Oeridian)

Date: 95-10-02 11:28:56 EST

From: Sabretore

The Oeridian pantheon is the largest:

Procran,GG - OC (Oceans, Seas, Salt) NC m
Zilchus,GG - OC (Power, Prestige, Influence, Money Business) LN m
Atroa,LG - OC (Spring, East Wind) NG f
Celestian,LG - OC (Stars, Space, Wanderers) N(G) m
Delleb,LG - O (Reason, Intellect) LG m
Erythnul,LG - OC (Hate, Envy, Malice, Panic) CE(N) m
Fharlanghn,LG - OC (Horizons, Distance, Travel) N(g) m
Heironeous,LG - OC (Chivalry, Honor, Justice, Valor) LG m
Hextor,LG - OC (War, Discord, Massacre) LE m
Kurell,LG - O (Jealousy, Revenge, Thievery) CN m
Pholtus,LG - OC (Light, Resolution, Law) LG(N) m
Sotillion,LG - OC (Summer, South Wind, Ease Comfort) CG(N) f
Telchur,LG - OC (Winter, North Wind, Cold) CN m
Velnius,LG - O (Sky, Weather) CN m
Wenta,LG - OC (Autumn, West Wind Harvest) CG f
Rudd,LG - OC (Chance, Good Luck, Skill) CN(G) f

This is maybe the most fascinating pantheon. There is clearly a very naturalistic bent. Similarly, there are civilizing gods as well as gods of wickedness. To this extent, the pantheon mirrors that of the Suel. However, the Oeridian pantheon adds deities of mystic dimension (Celestian/Fharlanghn) and ethics (Delleb). The Chivalric Twins, Heironeous and Hextor, should also be mentioned for they place a spin on this pantheon found nowhere else. With only two more deities than the Suel, this pantheon covers much more ground.

As befits the Oeridian domination of the post-Migration Flanaess, the majority of the gods have become common.

Of all the pantheons, the Oeridian strikes me as most "medieval" in a fantasy sense.

Sabretore

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Oeridian)

Date: 95-10-02 15:48:05 EST

From: MB Drapier

This, I think, is the most difficult pantheon to deal with. This is largely because the "Mystery Cults" that Chaos has detailed do not seem to jibe well with the rest of the pantheon with which they have been included.

The larger part of the pantheon seems dominated by gods that are clearly imperial--Procan as a major deity of the oceans suggests a hardy, ocean-going folk, while Zilchus takes care of business, and both Celestian and Fharlanghn are concerned with travel over the immense distances of space. Heironeous and Hextor (pronounced erroneous and hector?) seem to be deities who would have developed while this tough and warlike culture expanded.

I would disagree with Sabretore's designation of this pantheon as medieval here--this is the pantheon of a culture that traded, and travelled, and built itself into an empire of great cities and urban living (which may have given birth to the deities of "Common" origins).

The one problem I have here is with the mystery gods Chaos has detailed--they seem more reminiscent of an agrarian society bound by the rhythms of nature, not of a society that dares to erect itself on top of nature, by sailing the seas, travelling over the Oerth and to the stars, creating a money economy, dumping the insights of nature for human morals.

I think I would be inclined to read the gods of nature and the seasons as being indigenous to the Flanaess, and not part of the pantheon that built the Great Kingdom. Sotillion, Wenta, et al. are the children of Beory, who was here before the Oeridians showed up.

MB

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Oeridian) Date: 95-10-02 19:15:01 EST

Aria13

The Oeridian pantheon, I see as under going a startling metamorphosis.

The original All-Father was Velnius (Sky, Weather) served by Atroa (Spring, East Wind), Sotillion (Summer, South Wind, Ease Comfort) Telchur (Winter, North Wind, Cold), and Wenta (Autumn, West Wind Harvest).

The second tier of gods were the Twin Gods. Celestian (Stars, Space, Wanderers) and Fharlanghn (Horizons, Distance, Travel) were the great civilizing influences, traveling and bringing knowledge.

Heironeous (Chivalry, Honor, Justice, Valor) Hextor (War, Discord, Massacre) represent what the Oeridians did with the knowledge. From a natural state they gained knowledge and fell to fighting among themselves. Velnius either would not or could not intervene.

The third tier of gods represent the fall out of the Oeridian's struggle to become civilized. Delleb (Reason and Intellect) and Pholtus (Light, Resolution, Law) were broader manifestations of Heironeous, while Erythnul (Hate, Envy, Malice, Panic) and Kurell (Jealousy, Revenge, Thievery) were broader manifestations of Hextor.

Procran (Oceans, Seas, Salt) and Zilchus (Power, Prestige, Influence, Money Business) represent the ultimate product of the civilization of the Oeridians, transcending the Heironeous/Hextor-good/evil dualism for the more subtle one of chaos and law. In reaching this distinction, because of their very civilized roles and because Velnius is now so far out of the picture, Procran and Zilchus have risen to lead the pantheon. Of course, the other deities remain active and the cycle continues.

Rudd (Chance, Good Luck, Skill) would become the much beloved deity that Oeridians look to get them through their trials and tribulations, which have been many.

Thus, the Oeridian pantheon had its nature phase, its civilizing phase, its intellectual phase and finally its urban phase, with appropriate reactionary movements. No other pantheon seems so lively.

Aria13

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Oeridian) Date: 95-10-02 20:30:17 EST

MB Drapier

Aria,

I like your ideas on the Oeridian religion a lot. They begin with the nature deities, and then as they move more, they turn to the travel deities and so on.

I'm not sure I see Pholtus and Delleb as originating from Heironeous. Heironeous is a warrior god, while Pholtus seems pretty middle or even lower class, and Delleb appears, frankly, monkish. But I appreciate the symmetry with the Hextor-Erythnul-Kurell stuff.

I do see the worship of Pholtus and Delleb as coming from a period of bloody strife, possibly civil strife, in the young Kingdom of the Aerdy. Possibly worship of Erythnul and Kurell grew in this period as well.

At the same time, worship of Procran and Zilchus was beginning to grow. I don't think that the Oeridians could have followed Procran earlier, since their point of origin according to the original Greyhawk set was a land-locked valley in what is now Ull. They must have learned of the sea god as they took to the waves in those early years.

Zilchus also probably emerged as the kingdom became more powerful.

MB

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Oeridian) Date: 95-10-03 09:51:30 EST

QSamantha

I really like Aria's spin on the Oeridian pantheon. I like the idea of gods being mutable.

QSamantha

PANTHEONS OF THE FLANAESS: THE COMMON GODS

By Sabretore, MB Drapier, SEPieper, & Aria13.

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Common) Date: 95-10-02 11:29:58 EST

From: Sabretore

The purely common deities are an odd lot:

Boccob,GG - C (Magic, Arcane Knowledge) N m
Incubulos,GG - C (Evil, Plagues, Nightmares) NE m
Cyndor,GLG - C (Time, Continuity, Infinity) LN m
Bleredd,LG - C (Metal, Mines, Smiths) NC m
Ehlonna,LG - C (Forests, Flowers, Meadows) NG f
Joramy,LG - C (Fire, Anger, Volcanoes, Quarrels) N(G) f
Lirr,LG - C (Prose, Poetry, Art) CG f
Myhriss,LG - C (Love, Beauty) NG f
Olidammara,LG - C (Music, Revelry, Roguery, Wine) NC m
Ralishaz,LG - C (Chance, Ill Luck, Misfortune) CN(E) m
St. Cuthbert,LG - C (Wisdom, Dedication, Zeal) LG(N) m
Trithereon,LG - C (Individuality, Liberty, Retribution) CG m
Zagygy,LG - C (Humor, Occult Studies, Eccentricity) CN(G) m

There is no apparent scheme that would indicate that this is a unified pantheon. Two of the deities -- St. Cuthbert and Zagygy -- appear to have once been mortal. QSamantha has suggested that with the cultural mixing of the Migrations a new mixed Pantheon is emerging. This may be the best explanation for these common deities.

This presents the interesting possibility of areas where:

- 1) - Pure pantheons are worshipped;
- 2) - The New Pantheon is worshipped;
- 3) - Old and New Pantheons are worshipped.

If we add the possibility of cultural survivals as cults, we have quite a range of possibilities.

In this respect, Greyhawk is so much more diverse than other similarly "medieval" settings, as to make them appear simple. And this only considers the deities listed in the original Greyhawk boxed set. Additional deities appear in the adventures, supplements and the Dragon Magazine.

If there is a conclusion to be drawn, I think it that we are seeing complete, or nearly so, pantheons, as well as the emergence of a mixed pantheon, the extent of which remains to be seen.

I have not seen a comprehensive list of every Greyhawk deity, but I would love to if anyone has such a thing.

Cheers:)

Sabretore

Subj: Common Gods

Date: 95-10-02 15:05:33 EST

From: MB Drapier

Chaos mentions that he interprets the "common" origin of the gods in the terms that are to be found in the boxed set: widely worshipped in most areas, and not specific to a particular people or ethnicity. I have interpreted "common" in another sense, not necessarily in contradiction to Chaos' interpretation: "Common," as I see it, refers to the gods which have arisen out of the mingling of different nations, different faiths, and different peoples. And, as their origin would indicate, most "common" gods are worshipped in and about the central Flanaess.

MB

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods (Common)

Date: 95-10-02 15:33:38 EST

From: MB Drapier

The common deities definitely suggest a culture that is urban, with origins in the city state, and possibly imperial as well. Note the abstract nature of the various areas of influence--even Joramy, who seems to have been concretized in her volcanic connections, is seen, not as the operation of pure nature as apart from human concerns,

but in analogy to our emotions, anger, quarrels, etc.

Deities like Boccob are specifically oriented towards the more abstract sort of magic (as opposed to Wee Jas, whose magic seems connected to the underworld and death--Boccob appears to be the magic-user as mathematician/genius), while Olidammara appeals to the sort of roguery that can only be practiced in a citified environment, and Trithereon is unthinkable except in a loose federation of states--not feudal at all.

This preoccupation with good living and relationships with others seems apparent given the present state of life in the Flanaess, the gods of an urbane people who are more concerned with what the gods can bring to their own affairs than with what they owe the gods.

MB

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods(Common)

Date: 95-10-02 17:32:59 EST

From: SEPieper

I always thought that the common gods were originally worshipped by one ethnic group but over time they were adopted by the neighboring peoples(i.e. Romans adopting Greek gods). Over the intervening centuries the original ethnicity has become lost or confused. Now these gods, who are widely worshipped, are called common gods.

As for there being more Suel gods known than Baklunish, it could be because the Suel migrated through the Flanaess while the Baklunish stayed on the fringe. Or maybe it just has to do with the old adage, "Know thy Enemy".

As we know the Suel were enemies to just about everybody, therefore they might be better known.

Steve

Subj: Re: Mystery Gods(Common)

Date: 95-10-02 19:16:08 EST

Aria13

I agree with MB that the common deities represent an urban movement. I think Sabretore also right in seeing these deities as the product of the cultural mixing in the Flanaess. A new people are bringing forth new gods.

How these new gods will relate with the established gods remains to be seen. I do not see the new gods as organized into a pantheonic hierarchy. This gives the older gods an advantage in both long standing loyalty and organization. I see the new common gods as very much still cults. Large cults, rivaling older faiths, but still cults. Only St. Cuthbert approaches a true religion, followed by Ehlonna, Olidammara and Trithereon.

Aria13

DYVERS, CITY OF ADVENTURE: PROCAN & ZILCHUS

By QSamantha, with questions by MB Drapier.

Subj: P&Z in Dyvers

Date: 95-10-03 09:55:01 EST

QSamantha

Hi,

I am a neatness person. I can't help it. I just like to keep things picked up with everything in its place.

So. I was cruising through some campaign notes and I ran across some stuff on Dyvers, which I didn't post previously. Luckily, both Procran and Zilchus have been mentioned fairly often in the current discussion. So here they are as I have done them up.

In my campaign, Procran & Zilchus are the two dominant faiths in Dyvers. The polytheism of the Dyverse makes dominance a fuzzy concept but Procran & Zilchus manage. Dyvers reliance on trade and the sea give Procran & Zilchus a prominence other deities don't enjoy. Procran & Zilchus, however, are quite content being first among equals as far as being worshipped. Neither faith is even slightly monotheistic, though Zilchus' faith has a decided Oeridian bias.

I hope you enjoy P&Z.

QSamantha

Procran

Procran is the Oeridian God of Oceans, Seas and Salt. Something of an elemental deity, Procran is also the worshipped by persons traveling on the water or who make their living through fishing or diving. His control over salt refers to his often vengeful temperament rather than any limit to salt water. Procran is worshipped chiefly in seaports with substantial Oeridian populations like Dyvers, Leukish, Rel Astra and Pontylver.

Procran's Avatar (Warrior 20, Priest 16)

Procran's avatar takes the form of an immense giant, often wading in a body of water. Bare from the waist up, the avatar wears a loose greenish blue shift that falls to just above the knees. Strikingly well muscled with a great head of wild, blue-black hair and a dripping beard, Procran appears to be of middle but indeterminate age. His eyes appear rheumy and his flesh wet and milky.

Procran will manifest his avatar unpredictably. Like a farmer walking his fields, Procran takes a proprietary interest in the seas and likes to personally inspect them. Rarely, will he approach land on such jaunts, appearing as a distant figure on the horizon if at all. Ships may have closer encounters. Whenever Procran is encountered the waters will be dead calm and all winds will die down. Only the waves made by his passing will disturb the sea.

Str 25 Dex 19 Con 25 Int 20 Wis 23 Cha 22 (awe not appearance)

MV 16 SZ 100' MR 20% AC -4 HD 25 HP 240 #AT 2 THAC0 0 Dmg 1d30 (fists)

Special Att/Def: The breath of Procran's avatar can create gale force conditions and waves capable of sinking ships and flooding coastal areas. His avatar will be unaffected by these conditions and moves through the water with complete freedom at all times. No water based spells will harm the avatar but cold spells function normally.

Statistics: AL nc; WAL any chaotic and those who travel on water; AoC Oceans, Seas Salt; SY A pair of fiery eyes in a cloud trailing lightning bolts.

Duties of the Priesthood

Procran's priesthood is large and highly organized, despite the god's chaotic nature. Each of Procran's temples will have double the number of priests of similarly sized temples. Most of these priests will be of low level.

A temple will be lead by at least one High Priest of at least 16th Level, assisted by three aids of at least 13th Level. There will be one 10th to 12 Level priest for every 10 1st through 3rd level priests. These 1st through 3rd Level priests will constitute the bulk of a temple's staff. Priests between 3rd and 10th Level will be uncommon.

When a priest of Procran is between 1st and 3rd Level, he must belong to a temple where he will be instructed in the temple's rites. Priests of 4th to 9th Level are expected to travel the world's waterways ministering to Procran's worshippers and spreading the faith. Upon reaching 10th Level, the priest must return to his home temple.

At that time, it will be decided whether a place will be made for him in the temple hierarchy, whether he may be sent to found a new temple, or whether he will be put to death, sacrificed through ritual drowning to serve Procran in the afterlife! These are the only options.

Only priests returned from the sea by Procran's will after being drown can exist outside these limits. Such priests are few and are immediately identifiable by their pallid skin and rheumy eyes that marks their ordeal. Such priests suffer a -4 penalty to their Charisma, which cannot be reversed.

A priest's duty is always to his temple for the temple represents the will of Procran. Unusual for a neutral and chaotic faith, this extreme devotion to a hierarchy is difficult for many priests, who must be chaotic neutral in alignment. This difficulty is regarded as a test of faith. Any alignment shifts are punishable by death, even the most minor. Death is by ossification. The offending priest is sealed in a cask that is filled with salt and placed in an slow oven. Once his remains are completely ossified, the priest's body is entombed within the temple's crypts.

Temples of Procran are huge cyclopean structures large enough to accommodate Procran's avatar if it chose to enter. The central feature of each temple is an altar at the foot of a huge empty throne, which must be large enough for Procran's avatar to be seated comfortably. The altar is formed from a single block of jadeite and a large, deep pool is located directly before it.

The temples are profusely decorated with bas relief sculpture of seaweed, seahorses, octopi, sharks, clams and schooling fish. All temples must be constructed within sight of water.

Devotions of the Priesthood

Procran's priests are expected to celebrate their faith at all times. They must always be ready to aid worshippers and to offer up that aid. Those that do not follow Procran but follow the ways of the sea or any other deities who claim control of the seas are to be converted or punished for their blasphemy. This does not mean that priests will rush to attack non-believers, nor aid adherents. A priest remains free to decide what measures are called for in a situation within these general principles.

Procran's rites always involve the burning of copious amounts of incense made from sea plants and animals, the blowing of shell horns, drumming and chanting. All of the 1st through 3rd level priests form a choir that chants and signs the refrains of the liturgy sung by the higher level priests.

The Rite of Teeming is the annual ceremony that marks the beginning of fishing season. After a service in the temple the High Priest leads a procession of all of the priests down to the water's edge. Each priest carries a ewer filled with holy water created in the preceding temple service. In order of rank within the temple, each priest comes forward and pours his ewer into the water. Without fail, fish begin to teem in the water until the water seems to boil with them. When all ewers are emptied, an offering is made to the waters. If the prior year's fishing was good, a portion of fish and bread is cast upon the waters. If the prior year's fishing was bad, an animal sacrifice is necessary. When the Rite is complete, the procession returns to the temple and the fleet may go out.

The Rite of Procran's Ride is the great monthly ceremony of worship held in each temple. All followers of the faith are expected to attend. Failure to do so will result in bad luck upon the water until the next ceremony. The bad luck increases for every ceremony missed.

During the ceremony, Procran's rise from the sea is enacted in the temple. A clergy member will be chosen at random to represent Procran. The rest of the priests will be dressed in elaborate costumes as his court. The entire ceremony is a riotous affair of music and dancing which ends with a fantastic feast made from the bounty of the sea for which thanks are given. It is said that Procran's avatar may on occasion appear during this Rite. Such appearances are momentous indeed. If Procran is not pleased by the ceremony, he will destroy the entire temple, all priests, the congregation and even the town. Should he be especially satisfied, they all will enjoy increased bounty for the next year. Priests in attendance on such an occasion gain +1 to all saving throws and gain +10 experience for the next year but suffer a -2 penalty to their Wisdom, which represents the mindnumbing effects of being in the presence of their god.

The Black Rite is one of the most closely guarded secrets of Procran's worship. Procran is mercurial and so is his priesthood. Offenses and slights are not taken lightly. If the temple is wronged or does not receive sufficient respect in a community, to include harming or wrong a priest, vengeance may be exacted. The worst form of vengeance is the Black Rite.

This Rite calls upon Procran's anger to punish a community or wrong doer. If possible the offending person or a representative person is kidnapped by the temple. That person will be bound and suspended over the pool in front of the altar. In the ensuing ceremony, the captive is ritually cut with a coral dagger while the chants of the ceremony call on Procran to raise his hand against the offender(s). As the Rite progresses, the victim gradually bleeds to death, his blood dripping into the pool before the altar. Outside a terrible storm rises. At the conclusion of the Rite the captive is cut free and dropped into the pool. Outside the storm breaks. It is not uncommon for Sea Zombies or Giant Kraken to rise with the storm.

Requirements for Procran's Priests

AB - standard; AL - Chaotic Neutral; WP - Barbed spear, dagger; AR - Plate made from seashells; TU - As cleric of three levels lower

RA - Priests and priestesses of Procran typically wear iridescent green, blue and black gauze robes in layers during ceremonies and blue tunics belted with short skirts on other occasions. The tunics will have Procran's symbol embroidered in gold on the chest. During colder weather, a long sleeved, full length ab of drab green is worn.

SP - All; Animal (sea); Chaos; Creation; Elemental Water; Healing; Plant (sea); Weather (Sea)

PW -

3rd - Water Breathing

6th - Polymorph Self (sea creature)

9th - Airy Water

12th - Lower Water

QSamantha

Zilchus

Zilchus is the Oeridian deity of Power, Prestige, Influence, Money and Business. He is the titular head of a large and diverse pantheon that has changed substantially over time. Zilchus did not always lead the Oeridian gods but rose to his present position of prominence because of his ability to most effectively deal with the challenges facing the Oeridian peoples during the period beginning prior to the Great Migrations. Originally merely a deity of commerce, over time Zilchus came to be a deity of influence and ultimately prestige. His affinity for power came much later.

Zilchus' Avatar (Rogue 20th, Fighter 20th)

Zilchus' avatar appears as a tall man of middling years with a salt and pepper beard and hair that falls in waves to his shoulders. He is always dressed in heavy, voluminous robes that completely conceal his figure. These robes are of the richest material but always of deep dark colors, usually burgundy, black or purple. Zilchus has a commanding presence and his eyes flash steel. Nothing about his presence suggests weakness or even mercy. He cannot be bargained with, only reasoned with.

Zilchus almost never manifests his avatar. He considers it beneath his station. Certainly, he would never manifest his avatar to aid his worshippers. Rather, he would appear only upon the most momentous of occasions that were suitably dignified and solemn. The recorded history of his church lists no occasions upon which Zilchus' avatar has appeared. The closest Zilchus has come to manifesting his avatar is a golden stream of sunlight in which many golden motes like coins seem to fall with a faint tinkling.

Str 21 Dex 21 Con 21 Int 22 Wis 23 Cha 21
MV 20 SZ 6'8" MR 40% AC -4 HD 20 HP 168
#AT 4 HD 156 DMG Any weapon + 9

Special Att/Def: Zilchus has the ability to Command any character with Oeridian blood, with no save, even clerics of other Oeridian deities. Non-Oeridian characters will automatically be Slowed, as per the spell, in the presence of Zilchus' avatar, and subject to Suggestion, as per the spell.

Statistics: AL In; WAL Lawful Neutrals and any engaged in business or of high social standing; AoC Power, Prestige, Influence, Money and Business; SY A golden bezant with inscribed circle and five petaled flower.

Duties of Zilchus' Priesthood

Zilchus' priesthood consists of three orders. Each Order is autonomous but every temple will have members of each Order in service. The highest ranking temple priest of each Order belongs to the Temple's Guiding Council or Zilnod, with the highest ranking priest in the temple chairing the Zilnod. Decisions are made by a majority vote of the Zilnod.

The Grand Zilnod is the Guiding Counsel of the entire faith and is made up of the three highest ranking members of each order, with the individually highest ranking member acting as the chair, or Nostrum. Only the Nostrum can speak for the Grand Zilnod and the faith. The Grand Zilnod meets once every year to set church policy. The location of this meeting is a closely guarded secret but it is believed to be in the heart of a great mountain of gold or even on another plane!

The Order of the Commandrol is composed of those priests who serve Zilchus as the deity of Power and head of the Oeridian pantheon. They are fewest in number. They rarely have any contact with worshippers and are little concerned with anything but venerating Zilchus. They tend to be very distant but are not arrogant. In addition to the special powers granted to all priests of Zilchus, Commandrole gain the ability to cast Sanctuary once per day. The Order of the Commandrol is open only to men. Members of the Order dress in purple robes with wide black borders decorated with Zilchus' symbol.

The Order of the Perfant is composed of those priests who serve Zilchus as the deity of Prestige and Influence. The Perfantine make up 2/5ths of the priesthood. Nobility, the ambitious, blackmailers and powerbrokers all see the Perfantine for clerical assistance. Members of this Order tend to be haughty, imperious devious and not a little grasping. In addition to their other powers, Perfantine gain the ability to cast Command once per day. This Order is open to men and women but there is a terrible rivalry between priests and priestesses of the Perfant, almost to the point of schism. Members of this Order dress in blue robes with wide navy borders decorated with Zilchus' symbol. Male priests wear darker shades of blue and women lighter.

The Order of the Mezzann is composed of those priests who serve Zilchus as the deity of Money and Business. The Mezzann makes up 2/5ths of the priesthood. Merchants are the primary responsibility of the Mezzanni. Members of this Order tend to be very practical, reasonable and approachable. Merchants make up the majority of Zilchus' laity and the Mezzanni take their responsibility to care for this flock very seriously. Their parishioners and attitude set them apart from the Perfant and there is a rivalry between the two Orders. This Order is open to men and women, who comprise about equal numbers of the Order. Dress is brown and black robes with wide borders of the opposite color decorated with Zilchus' symbol.

Members of the Commandrol do not adventure as a rule. Occasionally, they are sent on special missions to aid the church or its followers but rarely. Priests of the Perfant and Mezzann commonly adventure. They seek to advance the interests of their flock and take this duty very seriously. However, whereas Mezzanni are likely to be selfless, Perfantine are not adverse to feathering their own nest along the way.

Temples to Zilchus are large twisting structures with many connected outbuildings and towers. There is not one set design. While each temple is thus unique, the detail of the decorations mark them as temples of Zilchus.

Devotions of Zilchus' Priesthood

The Commandrole celebrate Zilchus three times a day. The morning (Apros), evening (Aventine) and midnight (Calopos) services are all open to the public but are usually not well attended. Only those in dire straits attend, for the services are long, dull affairs with much intoning of ritual speeches in Zilt, the Church cant, and the lighting of tall candles. Any Oeridian attending each day's prayers and praying for Zilchus' aid has a cumulative 1% chance per day of having the aid granted to a 15% chance. The chance is checked each day but if the 15% chance fails, the likelihood of aid returns to zero.

The Rite of Ascension is the province of the Perfantine and is the celebration of increased social standing. The Oeridians have a highly detailed and complex social hierarchy and having the Rite of Ascension performed is a way of publicly marking and announcing such advancement. Though strict adherence to Oeridian social custom is now rare because of the admixture of peoples in the Flaneass, many Oeridians and non-Oeridians chose to have the Rite of Ascension performed to solemnify and announce momentous events publicly. Births, weddings, ennoblements, accession to wealth, inheritances, even deaths are celebrated. The Perfantine charges for each service but there is a tangible benefit. In the area in which the Rite of Ascension is performed, the recipient gains a +2 to all reaction roles when dealing with natives of that area. The Rite involves the passage through a ceremonial arch and the ritual bathing and donning of new clothing.

The Rite of Weight and Measure is probably the most common religious observance of any faith. Performed by the Mezzanni, this Rite is used to seal trade agreements. The priest performing the ritual is effectively vouching for the soundness and fairness of the deal. A variety of divination, the Rite of Weight and Measure will reveal to the priest any falsehoods, cheating or trickery involved in the deal and give him the ability to exact absolute compliance to the spirit and letter of the deal from both parties. This Rite is commonly performed hundreds of times a day. Each party provides the priest a gold, silver or copper piece, depending on the value of the deal, and promises ten more if the deal is successful. The priest takes one piece in each hand and claps his hands together. That's all there is to it. The parties are honor bound to pay their promised return or lose the services of the church until the debt is made good.

Blackmailing is a practice of the Perfantine. They regularly "trade" information. However, this practice is very carefully managed so as not to harm the temple's reputation. No member of the Perfantine may perform blackmail more than once per year. This practice is euphemistically called the Rite of the Friendly Whisper.

Similarly, usury is a practice of the Mezzani. They will "finance" trade deals for 25%, even 50%, interest, using as heavy handed collectors as any moneylender or loanshark. Again, this practice is carefully regulated. No member of the Mezzanni may charge usurious rates more than once in a month. This practice is euphemistically known as the Tithing Rite.

Temples of Zilchus tend to be very powerful even if not large. They use their influence to the faith's advantage. However, they are also very civic minded. A temple will readily spend funds to improve city services or defenses. Every year on the 15th of Flocktime, Zilchus' high holy day is celebrated by a huge public feast open to everyone.

There is a reason for this largess. Each temple of Zilchus is competing for a singular honor. When the Oeridians migrated to the Flaneass, they left behind the Great Temple of Zilchus. A new one has never been constructed. It is believed that Zilchus will manifest his avatar to dictate where the new Great Temple will be built. Every temple strives to prove worthy of this honor and tries to make its city a suitable site in Zilchus' eyes.

Requirements for Zilchus' Priests

AB - standard; AL - Lawful Neutral; WP - Mace, Flail; AR - Scale, chased in brass, silver or gold; TU - As cleric one level lower; RA - This is discussed in the section discussing the three Orders.

SP - (All Orders) All, Combat, Healing, Protection, Wards

Commandrol - Law

Perfant - Charm (Note: Perfantine do not have access to Divination, reducing the danger of the Rite of the Friendly Whisper)

Mezzann - Divination

PW -

1st - Every priest of Zilchus gains one additional spell that must be chosen from that priest's Order specific sphere.

5th - Tongues

10th - Shout

15th - Power Word, Stun

QSamantha

Subj: Procan and Zilchus 95-10-03 11:37:49 EST

From: MB Drapier

First off, I loved QSam's work on Procan and Zilchus. Thanks for the design work, Sam!

I also have some questions/emendations. I'm not sure I like the grisly revenge ceremonies associated with Procan, or the ritual drowning business. In my world, Procan is a god much like Poseidon--revered for his power but not widely worshipped, or taken as a patron. He is chaotic and unpredictable, quick to anger as QSam describes, but not likely to vent that anger in ritualistic ways. Offensive acts against the temple are not punished merely by ferreting out the individual, but by disasters visited on the community as a whole until Procan is placated.

In my WoG, most sea-faring folk worship Thyrr the Mariner, who is the liegeman of Procan. Like Procan, Thyrr tends to be wild, but he is more human as well. Centers for the worship of Procan are few, while the temples of Thyrr are many. The priests of Procan also tend to stay away from direct involvement in human affairs. They are consulted, but tend to stay a bit aloof.

I liked QSam's Zilchus a lot, too. In my campaigns as well, Zilchus presides over contracts and borrowing and lending. I don't know about the blackmail--that seems to be an unlawful use of money. and the idea of information for money (while clear enough to those of us in the computer age) seems a bit too abstract for the priests of Zilchus, who I think are concerned with real value, stable and measurable (or relatively so). No alienation of value for the followers of this god.

I wonder what the relation of these gods to undead is as well. QSam mentions the sea zombies, and I guess lacedon, etc. falling to Procan as lord of the Oceans. But what about Zilchus--one part of me says that as a god of the living and their living trade relations, unlife would be inimical to Zilchus. But as a god of contracts, it would seem that he should be able to take control of undead (at least those of lawful ilk) for his own ends. Are there restrictions?

Perhaps the priests of Procan can only command those undead who are connected with the water, while Zilchus can only command those of lawful sort?

MB

Subj: Re:Procran and Zilchus (MB) 95-10-03 14:32:29 EST

From: QSamantha

I chose to add the revenge aspects to Procran to emphasize that with a NC alignment he could be as bad or as good as he want's to be. To me it added a touch of dangerous unpredictability. Note that the Black Rite is very secretive, which I meant to mean it is not widely practiced but available.

I chose the ritual drowning because I see Procran as sort of a watery-All-Father like Odin, before they cleaned him up for Edith Hamilton's books on myth. Odin used to wear a hangman's noose. The Poseidon aspect is there but to me there is also an Odin aspect. This older Odin aspect also buttressed my decision to go with the Black Rite as long as I was being bloody.

I see Procran's control of undead as strictly limited to Sea Zombies. That's why I listed the priests TU as three levels lower than normal.

Zilchus isn't really concerned with undead as I see him, so I gave a -1lvl TU penalty. I didn't make it more severe because he does have his Power aspect and as head of the pantheon has appearances to keep up.

Hope that helps.:) And I'm glad you liked P&Z.:)

QSamantha

AL-QADIM: EXPANDING THE BAKLUNISH PANTHEON

By Aria13, QSamantha, Sabretore, & MB Drapier

Subj: AQ Gods in WoG 95-10-04 19:32:44 EST

From: Aria13

The Al-Qadim deities have been mentioned as possible add-ons to the Baklunish pantheon. I'm not sure everybody has access to the AQ - Land of Fate boxed set. So, I've decided to post a brief description of each of the AQ deities. If you want to go from this info you can. It may help you decide whether or not to buy AQ. It really is a great product. Most importantly, it may provide a ground for discussing whether or not these AQ deities really are suitable to being added to WoG.

The information provided is somewhat thin, because of the particular non-sectarian nature of AQ, and alignments are not given in AQ. Here goes.

Hajama the Courageous is the Greater God of Courage in the Face of Opposition. He is not strictly a god of warriors but of all who are persistent and try to overcome obstacles. He is chiefly popular in rural areas. He is one of the sons of Kor and the twin brother of Najm.

Hakiyah of the Sea Breezes, Hakiyah the Honest, is the Greater Goddess of Truth. She embodies a calm, meditative and methodical approach to seeking truth. The goddess not only upholds truth but encourages her followers to actively seek out the truth. Hakiyah is related to Haku, being either niece, sister or aunt.

Haku, Master of the Desert Winds, is the Greater God of Personal Independence. His followers are encouraged to apply themselves to their tasks and to never do anything half-heartedly. Self-reliance and avoiding being a burden to others are tenants of the faith. Haku is related to Hakiyah, being either nephew, brother or uncle.

Jauhar the Gemmed is the Greater Goddess of Wealth and Industry. She may also be a goddess of dancers and courtesans but this is unclear. She is popular among merchants. She is the daughter of Kor.

Jisan of the Floods or Jisan the Bountiful is the Greater Goddess of Fertility, Productivity, Rain and Floods. She is a great rival of Jauhar. She is popular among merchants.

Kor the Venerable is the Greater God of Wisdom, Sages, Age, Stability, Order and Tradition. His followers revere the elderly. They always attempt to learn from their mistakes. Kor is the Father-figure of the pantheon.

Najm the Adventurous is a Greater deity possibly a god or goddess. His portfolio is Adventure, Curiosity, Exploration and Doing the Impossible. The attempt is deemed more important than the result. Hajama is Najm's sister and an incestuous relationship between the two is hinted at.

Selan the Beautiful Moon or Selan of the Garden is the Greater Goddess of Beauty, Pulchritude, Heavenly Grace and the Moon. Artists and gardeners worship her. She is definitely a goddess of pleasure.

Zann the Learned or Zann the Marvelous is a Greater God of Scholars, Learning and Intelligence. Zannite temples are all great libraries as well. Zann respects all knowledge and collects it.

Subj: Re:AQ Gods in WoG

From: QSamantha

I think Al-Qadim is just one of the best lines TSR has ever put out. The production values are just incredible. Nothing else TSR has done can compare to the presentation. However, the setting is necessarily limited to Arabian Adventures in the main but it's wonderfully exotic like no other setting.

I think the gods of AQ could be translated to WoG but they need work. They are just not presented in enough detail. Then again, most WoG deities are nothing more than names and portfolios.

Here are my suggestions for portfolios and alignment:

Hajama - Courage, Persistence, War, Bravery LN
Hakiyah - Seas, Honesty, Truth, Meditation N(C)
Haku - Winds, Freedom, Self-reliance, Commitment NG
Jauhar - Gems, Wealth, Industry, Dancing, Courtesans CN(E)
Jisan - Fertility, Productivity, Rain, Floods. CG
Kor - Wisdom, Sages, Age, Stability, Order, Tradition.LN
Najm - Adventure, Curiosity, Exploration and Doing the Impossible. CN
Selan - Beauty, Pulchritude, Heavenly Grace, Moon, Art CN(E)
Zann - Scholars, Learning and Intelligence. N

Added to this list would be:

Istus - Fate, Destiny N

Geshtai - Lakes, Rivers, Wells N

Xan Yae - Twilight, Shadows, Stealth, Mind over Matter N

Zuoken - Physical and Mental Mastery N

Arguably all of the AQ gods could be given N alignments. I think they all should be neutral to one extent or another to follow the Baklunish model but I think we can work in some variety without harming anything.

I would vote for incorporating the AQ gods. AQ is a dead setting. The Baklunish people are more or less Arabian-esque. It is an easy way to quickly pump up the Baklunish pantheon and it puts AQ to some good use. After WoG, AQ is the best setting TSR has produced. BR, upon embarrassed reflection, comes in third. DS fourth. RL a distant fifth. OA a still more distant sixth and after that who's counting? IMHO.

Two notes of caution, however. If adopted, the Baklunish pantheon would be more tight and culture specific than any other, even the Suel. I'm not sure this is "Greyhawkian." The Baklunish have also been, IMO, largely ignored in WoG. If this pantheon is adopted and used, that might change. I'm not sure that is "Greyhawkian." So, I guess I am cautiously in favor of this idea. "Greyhawkian" flavor is important to me.
QSamantha

Subj: Re:AQ Gods in WoG

From: Sabretore

I'm not sure about these AQ gods.

I guess we could have Istus (Destiny) and Kor (Tradition/Order) as the heads of the pantheon. Haku (Deserts) and Hakiyah (Seas) would be Kor's younger brother and sister. Zann (Knowledge) and Selan (Beauty) would be Istus' younger brother and sister.

Hajama (Courage) and Najm (Adventurousness) would be the twin sons of Istus (Destiny) and Kor (Tradition). Jauhar (Wealth/Courtesans) would be daughter of Kor (Order) and Selan (Beauty). Jisan (Fertility/Rain) and Geshtai (Rivers) would be the twin daughters of Hakiyah (Seas) and Zann (Knowledge). Xan Yae (Twilight/Mind) would be the daughter of Istus (Fate) and Zann (Knowledge). Zuoken (Physical and Mental Mastery) would be the raised follower of Hajama (Courage) and Xan Yae (Mind) or their incestuous offspring.

The conflict between Jauhar (Courtesans) and Jisan (Fertility) would be the chief one in the pantheon. The attentions of Hajama and Najm might be the prizes to be one, with Geshtai siding with Jisan against Jauhar. Selan would side with her daughter Jauhar.

Istus and Zann would stay out of it, given their temperaments. Xan Yae might be happy with Zuoken. Kor, Haku and Hakiyah would be busy running their portfolios. Of course, they might become involved if desired.

Certainly, this would become the most internally consistent pantheon. Acknowledging QSamantha's problem with that, the Baklunish are at the fringes of the Flaneass and their states to the west are both culturally distinct and homogeneous. So a tight pantheon wouldn't necessarily be bad. On the other hand, unless you are in a Baklunish area, it might be hard to get these deities in play. Jauhar as Goddess of Courtesans might be the best deity to become Common in addition to being Baklunish and her conflict with Jisan might pull in the whole pantheon.

Just some thoughts.

Cheers:)

Sabretore

PS - Al-Qadim was a fantastic line and, of course, it got killed. RIP.

Subj: Baklunish gods and politics

From: MB Drapier

One of the things that troubles me about the Baklunish states as they appear in Greyhawk is the absence of a clear cultural/political pattern reflected in the relationships between the states and their supposed religion. If they are modelled on the Islamic empire of the early medieval period, then there should be a single Caliphate governing all the states, with rulers who owe allegiance to the Caliph as the supreme leader of a single religion. Instead, the Caliph of Ekbir is just one of a number of rulers with various titles and no clear hierarchical relationship between them.

What was the Baklunish Empire like before the Invoked Devastation? Was it more like the Persian Empire, or was it like the early medieval Caliphates? Did the Invoked Devastation itself shatter the power of the Caliphate

over the collected states of the Baklunish, or is the Caliphate of Ekbir something new in the Baklunish experience? Certainly, to a large extent Ekbir will mirror the Theocracy of the Pale, more religiously tolerant perhaps, but with a definite sense of a state religion and state power. Is the god of the people of Ekbir someone like Kor? Or might the god of ultimate law, merciful and compassionate, be another version of Pholtus?

And what of the Caliph's interests in the other states of the broken empire? To what extent has the religion of Ekbir been institutionalized in places like Zeif, Tusmit, or Ket? What is the relationship of this religion to the various tribal gods it attempts to displace? Might the Baklunish believe in a sort of overgod, and is the Caliphate of Ekbir the first appearance of the overgod on Oerth? What would be his relationship to an older deity like Istus?

My guess is that the god of Ekbir is originally a tough, lawful desert god, transported to the corrupt cities by virtuous dervishes and nomads. Perhaps, as far the nomads were concerned, it was the lawless worship of the other gods that brought down the Empire in the first place. Now, the worship of this god has spread throughout the Baklunish world (the god is almost certainly the same who helped create the Cup and Talisman of Al'Akbar in the older days). I see this god, then, as up-and-coming, replacing some of the older gods of the past (and these would include animistic gods like Geshtai as well as divinatory gods like Istus). There is some evidence that the followers of this god at one time sought to expand their worship into the Flanaess (along with the borders of the Baklunish world). Why else would there be an order of Knights dedicated to keeping them at bay? But it may be that the time is right for another holy war to mobilize the forces of the Baklunish. According to the original DMG (the only source I ever use on such matters), the Cup and Talisman of Al'Akbar was lost in the Bandit Kingdoms. Might the time not be proper to recover it? And what of the Jacinth of Inestimable Beauty once possessed by the Sultan Jehef Preen? That passed first into Ket and then down into Keoland--no doubt it is now somewhere in the area of the Hold of the Sea Princes. The Baklunish would surely want their treasures returned.

I would suggest that DMs putting some of these plots into motion consider the religious and political state of the Baklunish at present. I see a very powerful Caliphate which technically is the center of Empire and a bunch of squabbling rulers who are vassals or satraps of various sorts. This would involve a slight reorganization of the Baklunish states along medieval lines, but would result in some interesting cloak and dagger stuff, especially for players who are encouraged at first to see the Baklunish as a single, undifferentiated mass.

Subj: Re: Baklunish politics
QSamantha

I see the ancient Baklunish Empire as very much in the Persian model, with a church trying to get the Emperor to accept Caliph status, much as the Pope wanted to crown Charlemagne in an attempt to exert some control over him. Unlike Charlemagne, the Baklunish Emperor didn't need the religious trappings.

When the Empire was destroyed, the aptly described shattered remains had to fend for themselves. The church set up Ekbir. Zeif claimed descent from the Peacock Throne. Tusmit is just happy to be free from both. Now, if they can just keep the Paynims at bay.

I see all three states squabbling mightily, unifying only in the face of danger (The Paynims) or when a charismatic leader appears to declare Jihad on the Eastern Flanaess.

Subj: Re: Baklunish Gods
QSamantha

I don't see Ekbir as devoted to one god but the same pantheon as Zief and Tusmit. Similarly, I see Ekbir as very tolerant religiously. The only exception to this is theocracy. Ekbir believes fervently in theocracy and this is what it would export. Once theocratic control is established, the mullahs are more than willing to tolerate behavior and beliefs not their own. They will just tax you in accordance with how far from their norm you are. Only when a religious fervor seizes the people, usually resulting in a Jihad, does this easy going manner change.

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End of the Best of Greyhawk 7

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