

BEST OF GREYHAWK #13

Excerpted from the World of Greyhawk folder #13 (and the end of #12)
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October 24, 2011

15 years ! (since these folders have been written)

For all these long years I have kept not only a copy of the Best of AOL files, but also the integral copy of the folders #1 to #31. Two years ago (2009) I have decided to carry on the work of Tal Meta and I have formatted and turned into .pdf the “Best of” folders #11 and #12 that only existed as raw text files.

The “Best of AOL” files #1 to #12 are available on my website <http://www.greyhawk.fr> that contains a mix of English and French resources.

Two events occurred recently that gave me the motivation to continue the work of compilation started by Nathan E. Irving so many years ago. The first is that all those files have recently been (re)uploaded in Canonfire, and the second reason is that my hard drive has just crashed and I have lost most of my backups of very old files related to Greyhawk (Compuserve and rec.games.frp.dnd discussions, copies of the original websites of some Greyhawk “Gurus” and Greyhawk Exchange Network files dated from 1988 to 1995) amidst this total wreckage the Best of AOL survived.

I have started following the AOL TSR Greyhawk Q&A list in early 1996, my first contributions are within folder #10 (under 100523.157@compuserve, then under the pseudo Belvor_x) and most of my contributions concern Tharizdun and Furyondy. In folder #12, I had posted a contribution directly in French language and I had nearly been banned from the forum. Coincidentally, the translated version (in a somewhat shortened form) of this contribution had been published in this very folder #13.

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Folder #1 - The beginning of this folder is filled by the flamewar started in folder #12 about sexism in Greyhawk and also by comments on the recently published Oerth Journal #3 and Greyhawk Index. By the half of the folder some contributions by Tamerlain have given a new inspiration.

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ELVEN MIGRATIONS (Elves of the Test)

Subj: Elven Migrations
Date: 96-03-13 14:14:14 EST
From: TSR Roger

BTW, in the process of working on a FORGOTTEN REALMS project, I began to notice the overall similarities in having the elves of the Realms flee westward to Evermeet and the elves of the Flanaess (or some part of the Flanaess, anyway) flee eastward toward Lendore Island. I'm missing some GREYHAWK materials, but is it noted anywhere why the elves are taking over Lendore Island? Is this the new Evermeet, and if not, how are they different?

Subj: Re:Elven Migrations
Date: 96-03-13 16:26:54 EST
From: JOHN JOHN

Evermeet started as the place where the elves were going to avoid extinction or something like that. Personally I think whoever came up with the idea read too much Tolkien especially the part about the "undying lands" home of the elves. There is no mass elven migration in Greyhawk that I'm aware of. I know that in newer products it talks about some test that elves go through (note:it only talks about this under some elven NPC descriptions) and that test is said to take place on Lendore Island. There is no mass immigration going on there though even though the islands are being taken over by the elves. I think this is more to keep information about the tests quite than it is because they think many more of their brethren are going to come and stay with them.

Subj: Re:Elven Migrations
Date: 96-03-13 23:09:17 EST
From: Lefto

In FTA's Atlas, under Lendore Isles, it states:

"When elves leave the mortal world, they have their own secret places of safe passage and departure, and Lendore is the most important of these within the Flanaess."

In the Campaign Book, describing Oakvein on p. 47, it states:

"Wood elves of other clans do not come here unless their need is great, or unless they seek The Leaving."

In the Marklands, on p. 39 in the entry for Cerenellyl, it states:

"The cataracts are developments of the 'moonbow' which appeared in his eyes 30 years past, a summoning from the goddess Sehanine to him to leave the mortal world..."

Clearly there is a Tolkien-esque migration taking place, very slowly even for elves, but steady nonetheless. As for Lendore, and in keeping with the Tolkien comparison, Lendore wouldn't be the Undying Lands (or Evermeet), but more like the Grey Havens.

The entry in the Atlas "...Lendore is the most important of these within the Flanaess." might imply that all these departure points lead to the same location, regardless of which plane you depart (WoG, FR, etc.).

Where might some of the other departure points be in the Flanaess?

Lefto

Subj: Re:Elven Migrations
Date: 96-03-13 23:39:17 EST
From: JOHN JOHN

We might want to keep elven migrations down to a minimum. Let's learn from experience. I've been reading the Forgotten realms folder and the major thread there is on destroying Evermeet so the elves can come back to FR

proper. The problem with elves leaving is that when they leave then obviously they aren't there to interact with or be PC's or NPC's etc. Personally I don't like the idea of a people wandering off and separating themselves anyway. It's much better to stay put and deal with your problems.

I much prefer the idea of the elves taking over Lendore isle to protect their test thing. I don't want elven migrations there.

PS. I was comparing Evermeet to Tolkiens "undying lands" not Lendore island(s). The small amount of migrations if any that are taking place on Oerth are nothing compared to the wholesale departure in FR.

Subj: Re:Elven Migrations
Date: 96-03-14 00:17:02 EST
From: QSamantha

I agree with John John. I don't want them to go but rather that they stay.

There is such a thing as too much Tolkien. How they deal with their problems, instead of running away can be fascinating, look at Birthright for one example. I personally favor the ideas of the elves harkening back to their ancient civilizations that predate human habitation in the Flanaess.

QSamantha

SUHFANG KINGDOM (Oerik's Oriental realms)
--

Subj: Re:SuHfang Kingdom!
Date: 96-03-14 15:43:53 EST
From: Iquander

In a week or so, I'll write up a post describing all of the off the map facts that we know from Gygax's fiction, both of the Sagard and Gord variety. For now, however, I'll tell you all that I know off the top of my head about the Suhfang Kingdom.

It's in the Far West, and is as close to an Asian culture as WoG has. All we know of it comes from a short story called "The Five Dragon Bowl," written by Gary Gygax (who more or less created AD&D and Greyhawk) and published by his company, New Infinities, a few years after Gary left TSR. The extract is found in "Night Arrant," a collection of other shorts that feature Gary's hero, Gord the Rogue, who also starred in two "official" TSR novels, "Saga of Old City," and "Artifact of Evil."

All we know of Suhfang comes from the words of a visitor to the City of Greyhawk named Magus Yeo (though he contested that he was also a prince). Suhfang itself is a "kingdom," but there is ample evidence suggesting that it is also an empire, as the westerners count five "imperial" dragons among their cultural iconography. Like the cultures described in the Oriental Adventures Hardback, the people of Suhfang see the world in terms of five elements, rather than the four acknowledged in the east.

If Yeo is any indicator, the Suhfang Kingdom is not a nice place, and has some alarming ties to Nerull. They technically pay homage to their ancestors, and Yeo himself traveled with the reanimated corpses of his former relatives.

There is ample evidence that the Suhfang Kingdom is on a different continent, as Yeo comments on not only the backwardness of the Flanaess, but also Oerik in general. Still, however, this could have just been a figure of speech, and the smart money has Suhfang in the northwestern region of greater Oerik (shown on page 18 of the Glossography). In this way, other lands mentioned by Gygax, such as Sa'han, Behow and Tsing-Chu (the former two from "Sea of Death," the latter from "The Fire Demon," a Sagard book) might be former (or even current) vassal states of the Imperial Suhfang.

Unfortunately, that's about all we know about the nation and culture, but it's enough to seed more than a few historical tidbits, in my opinion.

Iquander

Subj: Oerik's Oriental realms
Date: 96-03-15 00:47:26 EST
From: TSR Roger

I, for one, don't think it's a shame that the Realms got Kara-Tur. The GREYHAWK campaign now has a standard against which other creations can be measured, and the Far West of Oerik can be made *distinctly different* from Kara-Tur. I would hesitate to make the Far West evil, but *different* it can certainly be. I like the idea of dragons ruling a sort of Celestial Bureaucracy or Celestial Empire, and smaller states, some decadent and some advanced, would be welcome.

GREYHAWK NOVELS (Source of inspiration)
--

The previous mail (about Suhfang Kingdom) from Iquander started a discussion on the "quality" of the Greyhawk Novels written by E.G. Gygax, after a serious criticism by Arial3, Iquander describes what usefulness he has found in those novels. After this answer this thread derived on a very long debate between QSamantha and Iquander about sexism and mysoginism in E.G.G. novels.

Date: 96-03-17 05:38:42 EST
From: Iquander

Aria,

Forgive me for suggesting this, but I think you've missed the point on the whole Greyhawk novel issue. You state that Gygax is a terrible writer (which, to my knowledge, has never been contested here), and that there is very little utility in the books. Well, as I've reread all of the novels at least once and as many as four times, I've been able to get by a lot of the junk and just go for the exposition.

That is where I find useful little nuggets:

Gygax's description of Innspra, in the first book, for instance, was inspiring, and I've incorporated it into my game. Likewise, his three page useless to the plot description of Tenser's Citadel and the forces that live there were equally useful for me. The bit featuring the Scarlet Brotherhood and their conflict in the Pomarj in the opening chapters of Artifact of Evil was also highly useful.

As the books go on, the utility tends to increase:

from Gygax's Gord books we have the names of at least seven off-map countries (with as many as three to four times that number in the Sagard books, which I'm still picking apart), insight into the religion and leaders of the Horned Society, practically the entirety of Iuz's origin, the entire story of Iggwilv, the concept of the Balance as a political organization, the much loved political system of happy Hardby, the military lists of the Great Kingdom, large stretches of the geography of Nyron, complete city descriptions of Rel Mord and Greyhawk, an interdimensional nexus called Weir Way that ties up a lot of loose ends, a full listing of demons (several of which are new) who have interests in Oerth, the entire ruling council of Greyhawk (before the city boxed set), the organization of the thieves guild in Greyhawk City, more information on the Noble House of Gellor, details on the Vesve Forest, details on the forces of Iuz, details on Graz'zt, an almost limitless amount of information on the Abyss, almost everything we know about Tharizdun, likewise with the Sea of Dust, exactly everything we know about Ket and the Dry Steppes, additional information regarding Celestian and Farlanghn, more information on the "plague" demons, more information on demons, proof that devils are worshipped as a pantheon within Greyhawk, tons of info on Nerull, a virtual rundown of the Gnatmarsh, a virtual rundown of the wild region surrounding Dyvers, everything we know about Melf, most of what we know about Mordenkainen, most of what we know about Zugtmoy, most of what we know about Celene, lots of information about the Flinty Hills, additional information on the Quasi-deities, insight into the madness of Zagig Yragerne, lots of information on Eclavdra, lots of information on the Wild Coast, some information on Maure Castle, more than has appeared anywhere else about the Bandit Kingdoms, a little on the Shield Landers, everything we know about the Rhennee, everything we know about the Attloi, the only information we've ever been given on Oerth's Asian cultures, the only information we've ever been given on Oerth's Indian cultures, insight into the war between the Suel and the Baklunish, almost all of the "Flannae" names for various humanoids, exactly everything we have on the Cabals of druids and the Hierophants, the existence of the Obsidian Citadel, exactly everything we know about Rexfelis, the catlord, and, as a kicker, Gary Gygax's philosophy that acted as a basis for the development of the line as a whole.

<cont'd>

Date: 96-03-17 05:39:19 EST

From: Iquander

Certainly, all of the things listed above could be designed by individuals, but, given as it is in the fiction of Gygax, it's already there for us to use. The way I see it, a novel is no better or worse a place to find the above information than a supplement or module, and, if one avoids accepting the plots (or even the premise) of the novels into their game, there is obviously a lot of useful information to be found within the covers.

Bailey's Nightwatch (which, frankly, doesn't stand up to a second read as well as I would have thought) is probably the most useless, in game terms, of the novels as it takes place a good distance in the future (how far exactly is the topic of another debate, and one that I've gotten pulled into before).

As a source for "quirky" information, Norton's Quag Keep tops the list, as it's fun to look at her world as a proto-Greyhawk (which is what it is, frankly). I won't bore you with a big list here like the one above, but the book does give some information on the Sea of Dust and Blackmoor that I've found to be of use.

The two recent "Endless Quest" books are probably the worst of the lot in terms of reading tedium, but both offer in-depth (if simplistic) views of two structures, a tower on the Iuz/Furyondy border and Bigby's tower in Mitrik.

Rose Estes' books, both Greyhawk-related Endless Quest (i.e. Circus of Fear) or otherwise are completely useless in that they are extremely poor, on a literary basis, as well as being totally devoid of relevant or even possible campaign material.

None of these books is deserving of the Locus Recommended Reading List, but they do have game applications that I have been able to identify.

Iquander

Subj: Dealing with the Gord books

Date: 96-03-27 11:33:57 EDT

From: TSR Roger

I have several modest options for any GREYHAWK campaign DM who wonders if it is necessary to scour bookstores for weeks on end looking for the Gord the Rogue novels, whether from TSR or New Infinities:

1. Forget it. The GREYHAWK campaign depicted in the novels, all questions of sexism/racism aside, describe a land that become increasingly variant with the TSR version of the campaign. Place names are altered (check the frontispiece maps of the Flanaess in <Sea of Death>, settings are greatly changed (check the description and maps of the City of Greyhawk in <City of Hawks> and <Saga of Old City>), and the central theme is an assault against Oerth from the Outer Planes that results in the *total destruction of the world, its gods, and its peoples* and the removal of Gord and his girlfriend to AErth in the DANGEROUS JOURNEYS game. How useful is this?

There are indeed interesting little bits in the books, like the ecology description of the Sea of Dust (renamed the Ashen Desert) in <Sea of Death>, but you can do without this stuff, too. It is in no way critical to understanding the world as a player or DM.

In short, you can ignore these books are readily as you can ignore the Mika books by Rose Estes, which also depict a highly variant version of the GREYHAWK campaign.

2. Borrow little bits from the books for your home campaign, but wipe out all other information that is irrelevant or doesn't fit your conception of the world. Believe me, all you will have at the end are "little bits," but some might be interesting.

I find the Gord books interesting only as curiosities; I read some gaming literature just to get an idea of how the author views the game world. Whether the books are good literature is irrelevant to me, though bad books usually have a morbid sort of fascination value, like looking at police photos of a gross car wreck. They can even

be educational and informational, as in: "Wow, that's terrible. I'll be sure never to use a phrase like that when I write!"

I've had to deal with Gord fiction ever since I got to TSR in 1983. It is crud as literature and offensive as well, but we use manure for growing crops, so maybe there's a little value there--if the manure is handled carefully.

Roger

INDIA ON OERTH

Subj: Re:India on Oerth
Date: 96-04-09 14:42:37 EDT
From: TSR Roger

If there's going to be an India-style empire (or six) on Oerth, I would put it (them) south of the Sea of Dust, on the southern coast of Oerik.

A number of references on India-style fantasy cultures exist in AD&D and D&D game literature:

- * AD&D 2nd Edition <Legends & Lore>, Indian pantheon and religious/cultural notes (pages 122-137). There are also the AD&D 1st Edition DEITIES & DEMIGODS Cyclopeda and the D&D Original Set Supplement IV, <Gods, Demi-Gods & Heroes>, both of which have the Indian (Hindu) pantheon.
- * Various monsters in the manuals are Indian in origin (rakshasa, nagas, Indian elephants) or could be construed as such (weretiger).
- * DRAGON issue #84, page 30: "Never the Same Thing Twice" (describes rakshasa and gives new types of them).
- * DRAGON issue #189: "Rhino's Armor, Tiger's Claws" (describes Indian armor and weapons).
- * DRAGON issue #225, page 22: "Caste of Characters" (Indian culture kits for all classes).
- * DRAGON issue #226, page 42: "Arcane Lore" (Indian spells).
- * D&D <Champions of MYSTARA> boxed set, <Explorer's Manual>, pages 7-29 (nation of Sind).
- * Revised RAVENLOFT boxed set, <Domains and Denizens>, page 41 (domain of Sri Raji, a "horror in India" region).
- * <Web of Illusion>: RAVENLOFT module set in Sri Raji, with rakshasa and weretigers.
- * <MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM RAVENLOFT Appendix III: Creatures of Darkness> ("Figurines" section is good for Indian regions).

There was also an article on elephant care in another issue of DRAGON Magazine, but I can't find it at the moment. I would strongly urge the use of <The Complete Psionics Handbook> and the <Tome of Magic> in regions with Indian themes. Roger

FALCON SERIES

Subj: Re:Falcon Series
Date: 96-03-28 15:36:49 EDT
From: Iquander

On the Falcon Series

I think there are a couple of reasons why people don't like the Falcon modules. Firstly, they are inexorably linked to the City of Greyhawk, a product which many have expressed dissatisfaction over. Secondly, while these modules certainly provide a lot of information, it is of little use to people who don't play in the Free City itself. Thirdly, I think it possible that Anne Brown put too much info in those modules.

Look at it this way: Vecna Lives, in my opinion, is the perfect mix of source material/adventure. While I think certain aspects of the adventure too "scripted" and I'm not a big fan of the murder of the Circle of Eight or the ending of the module, I absolutely adore the campaign info in there.

Even that opening quote from "Chronicle of the Secret Times," by Uhas of House Neheli gives me a ton of information. As I've said before, I think every module should have a library in it, so the designer can work in

seemingly out of place trivia about the world (not only is this useful, it's realistic). The information about Verbobonc was likewise excellent (and it would've been better if it hadn't flatly contradicted previously established information from Fate of Istus).

The Falcon series, by the same token, includes lots of good information on the City of Greyhawk itself. The Spurned Cult of Iuz is particularly interesting, and I seem to remember a few unique locations both in the city itself and the surrounding wilderness. Personally, I wouldn't call these modules useless, but their use is limited to the Free City, which happens to be an area I seldom use.

Furthermore, the cardstock buildings are nothing I would ever consider using.

I guess part of the reason I've never used these modules is that they're just so thick. I fully admit that I'm daunted a bit by all of the material in there. If I would ever play these, I would want to do it right, and go through the entire series.

This would likely take up the better part of a campaign, and I'd rather spend that time using adventures of my own design.

Iquander

FURYONDY

Subj: Furyondy
Date: 96-03-29 19:39:22 EDT
From: Belvor X

I have the pleasure to post some notes on Furyondy
You will forgive my style, but remember that I am not a native english speaker.

Subj: Furyondy 1
Date: 96-03-29 19:41:13 EDT
From: Belvor X

I have been working on the history of Furyondy since the Vice-Royalty became the kingdom of Furyondy.

Most of my reflection started in recent events linked to Prince Thrommel (also called Prince Avras in FTA). I wondered why Prince Avras was so concealed in the Temple of Elemental Evil . I cannot imagine that evil worshippers could just abduct the Prince of Furyondy, Provost of Veluna, Marshall of the armies and future temporal ruler of a (reunited) Kingdom of Ferrond (Furyondy + Veluna) just for the pleasure to disguise him into a vampire and make a good joke to some adventurers.

There is something more serious behind that action, there is the " Holy Pact ".

The last Vice-Roy of Ferrond, Stinvri, was an ambitious and powerful Mage but he lacked the abilities required to make him a true leader. So he schemed for his son Thrommel.

He founded the Academy of Magi of Falk and developed the so famous Furyondian, and now nearly disappeared School of Metamagics, in order to oppose the magic of the Great Kingdom when the time will come, he then set the basis of a secret order of Chivalry called the Order of the Hart and above all he struck the " Holy Pact " with Heironeous.

The exact terms of the Pact are not well known but Stinvri promised that the cult of Heironeous should be placed above all others in his kingdom. In exchange, Heironeous granted some benefits to the kings and their heirs, as long as each king renews the "Holy Pact".

The " Holy Pact " seems to include :

* The kings have never been sterile, but they can have one and only one son - No daughters in the history of Furyondian kings and no succession struggles.

* The Prince is "naturally" lawful good.

* The heirs have full HPs, some extraordinary powers (ST+2 ; virtual immunity to disease, energy drain, magical aging, magical alignment change, death magic) and above all the " heirs " have a spark of divine power that allows them to resurrect in a crypt under the High Temple of Heironeous in (new) Chendl whenever they are killed.

There are two limitations to that automatic resurrection:

* As soon as the prince becomes king he loses that power.

* The power is not activated if the prince is deliberately killed by good people and he cannot be resurrected. (I even included some kind of divine aura around the corpse as his soul body left his material body and two angels came to guide him to the seven heavens)

At the light of the "Holy Pact", the Thrommel/Avras incident makes sense - As the evil forces were unable to permanently slay the Prince, they devised the Vampire masquerade to lure a good character into killing him (You've got to improve the illusion and let it fall when the Prince is killed - Watch the reaction of your players, as they discover what they have just done and the political consequences.

A suivre...

Subj: Furyondy 2

Date: 96-03-29 19:42:01 EDT

From: Belvor X

Prince Avras demise made me think of another strange occurrence in the past of central Flanaess : The history of the Paladin King Myro.

Myro was the son of Thrommel VII, like any royal heir he was lawful good and he was to become a powerful Paladin, but Myro was not happy to become the King of Furyondy just because he was the son of his father, he wanted to prove his own abilities, he secretly left Furyondy at the age of seventeen and he totally disappeared for many years until he proclaimed himself " Paladin King " of one of the Bandit Kingdoms.

Then an "unnamed agent of an evil power bestowed him the Hand of Vecna" - Quite mysterious no ! - When you want to get rid of someone there are more direct ways than giving him an evil artifact, except if that person cannot be easily killed...

The artifact slowly overcame the Prince's innate resistance to alignment change and Myro turned to evil.

An evil heir to Furyondy ! - What if Thrommel VII dies and Myro proclaims himself Thrommel VIII. Fortunately, the alignment change made him forget his origins and his insanity was just aimed at conquering more bandit kingdoms and threatening the borders of the Shield Lands and Nyronnd.

When Thrommel VII died, and because of the "Holy Pact", no heir could replace Myro. This is the time of the first vacancy, the Regency was bestowed on the High Priest of Heironeous who selected a "temporary" king : Belvor I - Belvor was later nicknamed the " Mortal King ", many think that's because he died less than two years after being crowned but those who know have a better understanding of what "Mortal" can mean.

After Belvor I, came his son Belvor II. Belvor II has been one of the greatest king of Furyondy even if he was not endowed with "divine" power. Meanwhile, Myro still lived increasing his strength and gathering his troops to attack either the Shield Lands or Nyronnd.

Belvor II reached an agreement with those two countries and a joint force attacked the bandit kingdom and defeated Myro.

A suivre...

Subj: Furyondy 3

Date: 96-03-29 19:42:45 EDT

From: Belvor X

Myro had been killed and the " Holy Pact " could be renewed

Belvor II remained on the throne until a new heir was found in the person of his nephew Avras. He then resigned in favor of Avras who became Avras I, in order to show that a new dynasty started, after Avras I came Avras II.

The old Belvor II died during king Avras II's reign and the latter decided that to honor the name of the former king his son would reign as Belvor III.

We all know Belvor IV, the current king of Furyondy and his son, who was to see the reunification of the kingdom. The Prince hesitated between Thrommel and Avras, but seemed to have at least chosen to be crowned as Avras III, thinking that calling himself Thrommel should be presumptuous.

Subj: Furyondy 4
Date: 96-03-29 19:43:34 EDT
From: Belvor X

What's going on now in Furyondy ?

I read interesting postings related to " what if the Prince is not dead "

WGR4 mentions that " The Prince was abducted shortly before the wars began. (...) Magical scrying has suggested to Belvor that his son is dead " - I assume that the Prince is really dead.

Now there are two alternatives :

* Marriage : Belvor III (quaffing other potions of longevity) marries with Kataryna, countess of Walworth, leader of the Shield Lands - That's a way to expand the kingdom to the North (If Furyondy is ever able to reconquer those lands, but that's another story)

* New dynasty : Have you ever heard of Artur I of Furyondy ? Belvor is now working for the future of the Kingdom. He knows that Artur is the Chosen of Heironeous and he has already arranged to give him some political weight. (Note to QSamantha : Why not a Kataryna I of Furyondy ?)

(Note : They are all Paladin of Heironeous)

Subj: Furyondy 7
Date: 96-03-29 19:45:13 EDT
From: Belvor X

The good conspiracy

We always speak of the deviousness of the evil cults, but good cults are also exceedingly full of intrigues.

The Pholtus case has been long debated and I read with delight the history (ies) of St. Cuthbert. As I understand the whole operation, Pholtus was a god of law and goodness, he made concurrence to Rao, Pelor and Heironeous. Rao took the first opportunity to control Saint Cuthbert and to cut Pholtus from his Lawful good aspect. Deprived from his lawful good wing, Pholtus naturally switched to neutrality and justifies the Theocracy of the Pale. Rao succeeded in removing Pholtus from the group of Lawful good gods.

Pelor tried (tries) to do the same with Heironeous. As Heironeous recovered quickly from long years of peace, Pelor " imported " his own warlike deity : Mayaheine. I call that a backstab and nothing else.

Finally, the reunification of Furyondy and Veluna was not only territorial. The new kingdom was to be spiritually lead by the Canon of Veluna - A high priest of Rao. If the reunification had succeeded the "Holy Pact" was over. Some whispers that the death of Prince Avras arranged the clergy of Heironeous and some even say that if they are not responsible for his death, they have made no great effort to...

Subj: Furyondy 8
Date: 96-03-30 18:41:48 EDT
From: Belvor X

Royal Chronology

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359 THROMMEL VI (338 : 359-365 : 365)
365 The Long Regency or First Regency (nil : 365-380 : nil)
- High-Priest PARES of Heironeous (365-378)
- High-Priest SOLENTAN of Heironeous (378-380)
383 THROMMEL VII (365 : 365/383-439 : 439)
439 THROMMEL VIII [Myro] (391 : nil-nil : 450)

439 First Vacancy (439-440)
- High Priestess KATHRYN of Heironeous
440 BELVOR I (391 : 440-441 : 441) - The Mortal King
447 BELVOR II (416 : 441-475 : 507)

475 AVRAS (III) [Hugh] (450 : 475-522 : 522)
522 BELVOR III (481 : 522-537 : 537)
537 Second Regency (nil : 537-542 : nil)
- Lord Throstin : Knight Commander of the Hart
542 BELVOR IV (524 : 537/542- ? : ?)

(Birth date : Regency/Coronation - End of reign : Death)

In the case of Thrommel VII that means that he is born in 365 CY and that a regency started the same year. He was crowned in 383 CY and reigned until his death in 439 CY.

Subj: Furyondy from France
Date: 96-03-29 21:51:15 EDT
From: TSR Roger

These posts are cool! Telling the history of a nation from the viewpoint of its rulers really casts a new light over the subject.

I especially liked the operation of the Holy Pact, conflicts between lawful-good churches, and the story of Myro. Nicely told.

Roger

Subj: Re:Furyondy
Date: 96-03-30 20:43:19 EDT
From: Aria13

Belvor,

These are some truly excellent posts!

Aria13

WHAT MAKES GREYHAWK, GREYHAWK.

Subj: Putting Greyhawk in Greyhawk
Date: 96-04-14 20:04:09 EDT
From: TSR Roger

I thought the above title would be better than "That QSam, I swear..." for the following topic.

After some late-night mulling over, the following things seemed to be necessary to make a non-Flanaess campaign truly a GREYHAWK campaign:

1. Worship of most of the known Suloise, Oeridian, Flan, and Baklunish deities should be practiced by the locals, with similar priesthood set-ups, special spells, etc.
2. Many of the same monsters should appear as are known to the Flanaess (or at least to the old Monster Manuals), though new monsters (possibly dependent on climate) can be added.
3. Descriptions of peoples, nations, and other cultural entities should follow much the same pattern as previous descriptions. (In other words, write up your new peoples and nations as are done for Flanaess peoples and nations in earlier works.)
4. Consider all possible tie-ins with the Flanaess, which for now is really the heart of the standard GREYHAWK campaign. In Frank Mentzer's Aquaria, as outlined in modules R1-R4, Oeridians from Aerdy sailed across the Solnor Ocean and founded colonies on the eastern continent, which has a distinctly "standard AD&D game" medieval-European flavor in all four of the modules. Oeridian gods are worshiped, and though happenings in Aquaria don't seem to affect happenings in the Flanaess and vice versa, this might not prove to be true all the time. (The fall of certain kingdoms on both sides of the ocean seems to be tied together in the history given in R4.)
5. Allow for travel to and from the Flanaess, though possibly with great restrictions. A teleporter might exist that sends people, once every full Celene, to or from your land to some point in the Flanaess. This link might be forgotten, but it can be exploited to link events in the two regions if you desire. You might even consider starting normal Flanaess characters off to explore your new region, possibly allowing them to return to the Flanaess after a long period of time or many adventures.

Some problems that occur here would involve things like the following, which are offered for anyone to answer later (if you dare!):

- A. How could a Land of Black Ice campaign be considered a GREYHAWK campaign if no Flanaess monsters or peoples appear there?
- B. Could a campaign set on another astronomical body in Greyspace be made into a GREYHAWK campaign using the above guidelines?
- C. Could a campaign set on a large island in the Solnor (or on Aquaria, for that matter) be considered a GREYHAWK campaign if no tie-ins link the place to the Flanaess?
- D. Looking at all the various sorts of GREYHAWK campaigns described in this folder in the past, what things do these campaigns have in common that identify them as "true" GREYHAWK campaigns?
- E. If someone played the Flanaess *exactly* as outlined in the Mika novels (GREYHAWK novels #3-6), setting it on the island of Drawmidja, would that be a true GREYHAWK campaign? Why or why not?

This test is your final examination. Do not copy your answers from anyone else's paper. You have one hour. You may begin. – Roger

Subj: Re:Putting Greyhawk in Greyh
Date: 96-04-21 04:25:02 EDT
From: Tamerlain

::::In a Rusty Voice caused by disuse::::

Roger,

Before taking your quiz, let me outline my philosophy on what makes Greyhawk, Greyhawk.

First, one starts with, what is called in Iquanderese, *CANON*. This includes all published material (modules, folders, books [including the first Gord books, but not Rose Estes'], boxed, monster sheets and "Dragon" articles on Greyhawk. The *CANON* is an essential starting point, but it is not infallible. Should one use the 1st edition Iuz, or the 2nd? And what about that variant Iuz in "Vecna Lives?" Ultimately, the DM decides which vision of Greyhawk will form his or her base (pre- or post Greyhawk Wars? Spelljamming or not? Any Psionics used?)

The next material the DM might consider is what I'll call Second Tier Resources. This includes material by people responsible, or very close to the creative process of the Greyhawk *CANON* (and primarily affiliated with TSR). This includes the remainder of Gygax's Gord books as New Infinities and the TSR's works produced to tear Greyhawk away from Gygax. Gygax's work is not of the best quality, and at times he was spiteful and

vindictive, but he was the primary author of the setting, so much of his material (especially on Western Oerik) can be included easily. Rose Estes' works (also not of the best quality), is placed here likewise because it cannot be said certainly that TSR desired to develop Greyhawk with this material. This might have been Rose Estes' intent...but it isn't apparent that it was TSR's. Other material which can be placed in this category are Frank Mentzer's enjoyable Aquaira material (recognized by Gygax and printed by the RPGA...even if not specifically called Greyhawk material therein.), and Len Lakofka's lost L3 material (if it is ever found!). Material printed in "Dungeon" could also be placed in this category. This material is very useful as background and development material and warrants a look by good Greyhawk DM's. Much of this material can be seamlessly grafted to the *CANON* without causing any strain whatsoever! And where it does (or if you just plain don't like it), don't use it!

The next group of material is that created by informed and enthusiastic gamers. This includes the material produced by groups like the Council of Greyhawk and by individuals like many people on this board. Much of this material is readily useful, or at least extremely thought provoking. It can be used to help flavor or add to the *CANONICAL* and second tier material, and to help broaden the scope of any Greyhawk campaign. Whether you borrow from some very inventive material (Like Len Lakofka's Suloise history material, or any one of Samantha's extremely interesting variants), this is the level that personalizes Greyhawk. Indeed, every DM's developing of a new village, or insertion of a unique new NPC falls in this category.

CANON is where one starts...it defines the bones, but the muscle, and the flesh is provided by the DM and the players. No two Greyhawks, therefore, will ever be exactly alike. (Or not even as alike as any two Realms settings)

After having said that...here are my answers to the questions!

<A. How could a Land of Black Ice campaign be considered a GREYHAWK campaign if no Flanaess monsters or peoples appear there?>

This would be unusual at best given the proximity of the LoBI to the rest of the Flanaess, however, if the DM allowed for divine interference, or a strong group of monsters, a strong magical barrier or curse, or an odd physical trait, it could happen.

Subj: Re:Putting Greyhawk in Grey2
Date: 96-04-21 04:26:23 EDT
From: Tamerlain

Continued---

< B. Could a campaign set on another astronomical body in Greyspace be made into a GREYHAWK campaign using the above guidelines?>

The above would be even more likely with another celestial body. There is no necessary trafficking which must take place (or even player knowledge). Only the DM would have to know that it was in some physical proximity to Oerth and could draw upon that interaction any time she or he chose, thereby bringing Oerth (and more specifically the *CANON* into play)

<C. Could a campaign set on a large island in the Solnor (or on Aquaria, for that matter) be considered a GREYHAWK campaign if no tie-ins link the place to the Flanaess?>

Ditto (although if Aquaria is used it already has an historical link to the Flanaess, but again, the players wouldn't have to know...but the DM should).

<D. Looking at all the various sorts of GREYHAWK campaigns described in this folder in the past, what things do these campaigns have in common that identify them as "true" GREYHAWK campaigns?>

In my opinion, those things that start with *CANON*, and those that work to keep at least that recognizable shape. Specific decisions on variants within the *CANON* is fine. Development from the *CANON* as starting point is a must, but expansion and definition physically, spatially, historically and culturally is fine and even necessary to some degree (Even if this means that in Sam's Greyhawk the Gynarchy of Hardby rises up and conquers the whole of the central Flanaess---hey, that's not a bad idea. It would solve the Iuz problem!).

<E. If someone played the Flanaess *exactly* as outlined in the Mika novels (GREYHAWK novels #3-6), setting it on the island of Drawmidja, would that be a true GREYHAWK campaign? Why or why not?>

It would be "True" Greyhawk for that person's campaign! It would not (according to my very clever manipulation of Estes' work) be *CANON*. Other DM's might not like that interpretation...or might not even allow importation of it into their Greyhawk campaign...but many's the DM who hasn't allowed a character from another campaign into their game too, does that necessarily mean it's not a true AD&D character?

---Tamerlain

ABOUT GODS ASCENDENCY

Subj: Re:Ascendency
Date: 96-04-16 19:16:14 EDT
From: Iquander

I have to strongly disagree with Aria's standpoint that "no mortal can ever become a god," because, according to what we know about ascendancy through the Greyhawk material provided to us, it's complete rubbish.

Zagig Yragerne was a mortal.

Because of the fact that we know the most about his ascension, and we know that he was indeed a mortal, I have to say that, yes, it is in fact possible for a mortal to become a god. In fact, a very clear process of advancement seems to be inherent to the Greyhawk cosmology. It would look something like this:

MORTAL --> QUASI-DEITY --> HERO-DEITY --> DEMIGOD --> LESSER DEITY --> INTERMEDIATE DEITY --> GREATER DEITY.

While I think it might be fair to say that a mortal could not advance above Demigod status (or perhaps Lesser, if you want to look at Cuthbert as a mortal), it seems clear that, at least the lower tiers of this progression are clearly open to mortals.

Iquander

Subj: Re:Ascendency
Date: 96-04-16 19:17:29 EDT
From: Iquander

DTorsiello,

Far be it from me to attempt to stifle discussion, but the topic of Cuthbert's ascension already filled an entire folder. I strongly doubt that there's much to be added to the topic. For the record, I side with the sphere of thought that says that he was once a mortal priest of Pholtus, who later fell out of favor and, through the intervention of Rao, became a lesser god. If you choose to look over the old folder, I'd suggest that Chaos28 probably sold me on his version of Cuthbert's history.

I've also outlined my thoughts on Zuoken rather clearly (I hope) in the third issue of the Oerth Journal. For those of you who haven't read it, I suggest that Zuoken was an Oerthly servant of Xan Yae who, through great dedication, performance and a difficult quest, became the Mistress of Perfection's "right hand man," so to speak.

Wastri is fairly outlined in Gygax's own work, and it seems clear that he was a mortal who ascended, perhaps due to his interest in the knowledge of the toad-kind who ruled the Oerth before the rise of mankind. I've tied his history in with the legend of the Pinnacle of the Toad, from Quag Keep, but I know that others are less open to adapting information from that source.

Rudd is a bit of a poser for me. Ideally, I'd work to tie in her existence with Olidammara, perhaps with that worthy participating in her ascension. I recently had a discussion with P Smedger, and he suggested that perhaps the "treasure" Olidammara was attempting to steal at the time of his transformation into a turtle was, in fact, the captured Rudd (necessary, as we've discussed, for Zagig Yragerne's ascension). I'm not sure, but I like the way it sounds.

So, then, my methods of ascension look like this (and this is in chronological order, by the way).

WASTRI

Little is known about the ascension of this being, but it is assumed that it occurred in great antiquity. The recent discovery by the Adept Wogan of the so-called Pinnacle of the Toad in the Cold Marshes has shed new light on the incident, but there is much still cloaked by misinformation and mystery. The Pinnacle itself, now sundered and half-submerged under the chill waters of the northern swamplands, once stood almost a mile high. It is not known how this feat was possible, especially given the unstable marshland, but the ruins remain today, despite the inability for modern scholars to explain their origin. Some have hypothesized that the Pinnacle was erected in eldritch times by a race of amphibious humanoids whose time has long since passed from the Oerth. Perhaps this would explain Wastri's hatred of the elder races of the Flanaess. At any rate, rumors persist that the secret of Wastri's ascension, and the secret that ultimately drove him thousands of miles to the south, lies buried among the solitary ruin of a forgotten civilization.

(Cont'd)

Subj: Re:Ascendency II
Date: 96-04-16 19:18:12 EDT
From: Iquander

ZUOKEN

Zuoken was a faithful follower of the D'ai Shatain, a martial arts-based wing of the clergy of Xan Yae. In the years immediately preceding the horrible wars that would end in the Twin Cataclysms, Zuoken was tested by his deity, and he proved worthy. As the sole survivor of an important battle with Suel-controlled renegade psions from the Baklunish Empire, Zuoken attracted the attention of the Mistress of Perfection, and he was given a quest by her to journey far to the north, to the Pinnacles of Azor'alq, in the Drawmidj Ocean. There, it is said that he defeated a host of dragons and even Azor'alq himself, and eventually, Zuoken gained the Shrine of Pools, where rest portals to the personal realms of all the deities and powers worshipped by the Bakluni. There, he located the pool that would take him to the realm of Xan Yae herself, and his test truly began. He conferred with his patron, the Catlord and a number of other powerful personages (some suggest even Pelor had a hand in the affair), and was sent to more than a dozen different planes, each of which presented a task impossible by human standards. Zuoken passed each, and so delighted the Mistress of Perfection, that she bestowed a portion of her divine energy to him on the spot.

IUZ THE OLD

With the help of Iggwilv, the Mother of All Witches and mother of Iuz himself, Iuz the cambion attempted to gain vast amounts of power. Iggwilv showed him the Soul Husk cavern. While some who have even heard of the fell place assume that the diabolical Iggwilv had coveted the caverns' powers for herself, she instead granted her evil son the secrets of the place. Using the power and life force stolen from the beings in the Soul Husks, Iuz became more than a cambion, but less than a full god. Later, Iggwilv vanished and Iuz was captured by the mage, Zagig (whose own gambit at immortality, it should not be ignored, was rather similar in nature, if not in appearance), but he still retained the small amount of divinity he had gathered to himself.

ZAGIG YRAGERNE/ZAGYG

With the indirect aid of Boccob and the direct aid of several quasi-deity associates, the Mad Archmage Zagig Yragerne manages to capture nine demigods under Castle Greyhawk. The power harnessed from this, added to the power of the Obelisk, an artifact of "pure" magical energy, triggered Zagig's ascension, and he became known as Zagyg forevermore.

Iquander

Subj: Re:Ascendancy
Date: 96-04-16 20:50:03 EDT
From: TSR Roger

I must agree with Iquander here that mortals in the AD&D game can indeed become immortal deities, because at the time I joined TSR in 1983, that was exactly the operative system. There is a hierarchy of ascendancy, and Iquander outlined it very well. Quasi-deities are the key, as Gygax outlined the system in DRAGON issue #71 in his article on those beings. They are mortals who are at the mid-point.

However, I also like Aria13's point that you can chuck the whole things and keep mortals on one side and immortals on the other, since that does keep the waters from getting muddy. -- Roger

Subj: Re:Ascendancy
Date: 96-04-17 02:56:57 EDT
From: Iquander

Having come out in favor of letting mortal ascend into the ranks of the Gods, let me now clarify a bit. I don't think I would EVER EVER EVER EVER allow a player of mine to do this. Half of me messages complain about how I hardly ever get the opportunity to run high-level campaigns, so I don't even envision ever having to deal with this issue. So, yes, the question is largely academic. That said, I still think it important. I like the fact that Zagig was a mortal who became a god. I also like the fact that there are relatively few other mortals who have done this. As something to drop into the background of adventures and campaigns, I think it's fun. Does that mean it needs to have direct implications on the way I run my personal campaign? Of course not.

For the record, I also think QSam's comparison of the progression into divinity to a munchkin player trying to steal Thor's hammer a little absurd.

I mean, come on. I'll take Thor, and you can have the character of your choice. Let's set aside a couple of afternoons to play the thing out. I guarantee, if played correctly, you won't even get to see the Son of Odin. It isn't going to happen.

Sure, giving statistics in the original Greyhawk books (and Deities and Demigods) did more or less invite the kiddies to try to take on the gods. I would hope that we can acknowledge this as a fault of the players, and not of the system.

Also, for the record again, everyone here seems to be utterly wooed by the avatar system as first fully outlined by the Manual of the Planes. I happen to think that system is a cart of horse dung, but then that's a different discussion for a different evening.

Iquander

Subj: Re:Ascendancy
Date: 96-04-21 05:27:21 EDT
From: Tamerlain

Okay this is truly my last post for the night,

I think mortals can ascend in AD&D, they definitely **have** in Greyhawk (some are "in process" Kelanen, and Murlynd to name two). I'm not even opposed to having players move through the quasi- and hero- deity stage (if you want to do some heavy duty plane hopping, this is the time to do it!). But this shouldn't be a Monty Haul time. Keep in mind that the character's at this stage are highly focused. They are probably more task and alignment bound than at any other time in their careers. A quasi-deity is going to make a Paladin seem wayward with regard to alignment concerns, and the types of quests and tasks required will be truly Herculean (using the Player's Option: High Level Campaigning Book is helpful here.) For my campaigns I've put together a very specific pattern of advancement. The following is from my next Council project:

The Path of the Powers

The "Path of the Powers," also called "Divine Ascension," is followed throughout the multi-verse. However, on Oerth it takes a unique twist in that it is a two-fold process, instead of the one step used elsewhere. The first step is becoming a quasi-power, a being on the quest of divine power, more than mortal but less than god. The second step involves becoming a hero-power. This addresses initiating a body of followers who will give rise to a priesthood.

A character may seek to ascend anytime after reaching 20th level. Once a character embarks on the path to godhood, he can never turn back. At this point the character no longer shows signs of aging, but he still ages but the character gains the life span of a gray elf, the longest lived of mortals. Magic can increase this span, but if the character has not gained demi-power status by the end of this his expanded mortal life, he is annihilated. If a character dies through any other agent besides age (that is, in struggling to become demipower), the character is usually welcomed with open arms the home of his deity and commissioned as a powerful proxy. This is true, generally, even in the case of evil characters. The being could be rewarded lesser Tanarri or similar status, no mane or lemure here. Occasionally an evil power even allows normal proxies. On the other hand, some deities might especially enjoy punishing such arrogant mortals

Quasi-Power

Once this quest is declared, the character is considered a quasi-power. The character ceases advancing in his original class(es). However, the character retains all class abilities, but gives up normal adventuring and now acts with new purpose. The character receives a special 20% magic resistance in addition to the change in life-span.

In order to begin this quest, a character must seek divine sponsorship usually a deity appropriate to the characters alignment, original class, or race and prepare a special offering for that deity. The gift can be anything the character desires and the DM agrees to. The donation need not be a single item. In any case, the gifts monetary value must be at least equal to the characters experience point total.

While preparing the offering, the character receives experience points normally. For each 300,000 experience points gained, the character can lower one saving throw number one point, to a minimum saving throw of three.

The ability to reduce saving throw numbers below the normal minimum for the characters original class is special, and it is why the character must give up his original class. The character gains no other benefits from accumulated experience; no hit points, proficiencies, skills, etc.

When the offering is completed, the character must journey to the deities abode and present the gift. If the character has been true to the principles of his alignment and profession, the deity probably accepts the gift. If in doubt, use Table 59, Encounter Reactions, from the Dungeon Masters Guide. If the deities alignment and profession for example, a lawful good fighter petitioning a

Subj: Re:Ascendency (cont'd)

Date: 96-04-21 05:31:02 EDT

From: Tamerlain

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A lawful good fighter petitioning a lawful good war deity uses the first column on the table. If the character and deity are slightly mismatched, use the second column. Otherwise, use the third column. If the reaction roll is friendly, the deity accepts the gift. If not, the deity destroys the gift and sends the character away. The character may then either retire, or start the process again with the same or different deity.

Note that the character might not get an immediate audience with the deity. Just finding the deity's abode could be an adventure in itself. The material in the PLANESCAPE setting provides details about what a character might find.

Once the deity accepts the gift, it assigns some heroic task to the character. This is called "The Test of Power." (In a PLANESCAPE campaign, the character becomes the deity's proxy as opposed to a quasi-power, see a Players Guide to the Planes). Completing this task proves the characters mettle. It is up to the DM to create a suitable task and design a series of adventures so that the character can complete it. A few examples follow:

- Found a dynasty
- Create a new magical item or spell that others seek to imitate
- Find and destroy and artifact from an opposing power or artifact
- Find and defeat an avatar of a rival deity
- Build a lasting monument to the sponsoring deity

- Save the ethnic or racial group which has the most followers of the deity en masse. (In the history of the Flanaess, this happened with the Flan and Oerid migrations).

After the completion of this task, the character is considered a hero-power.

Hero-Power

Once a character becomes a hero-power several things occur. The character initially receives a boost in magic resistance to 25%. Then the character must continue gaining experience to lower all of her saving throws to 3. This still costs 300,000 experience points per point of advancement.

After this has been accomplished, the character must then gain enough experience points to permanently raise all ability scores (or sub-ability scores) above 12. At least one ability score must also be raised to 19 or higher. After each additional 300,000 experience points, the character gains 1 point to apply to any ability (or 2 points if sub-abilities are used). Magical means of augmentation such as wishes or tomes may speed this process.

After both of these have been accomplished, the character now turns her attentions to her future followers and priesthood. She must decide her portfolio and specific areas of responsibility (this in part is dictated by the sponsoring deity, and partially by the characters personality and abilities.) She must decide which spheres will be her major spheres of influence, and which will be her minor spheres. This hero-power must then gain enough experience points to be "bonded" with these spheres. The cost for this is 300,000 experience points per major sphere, and 125,000 experience points per minor sphere, that the character wants to allow her priesthood.

After the spheres have been determined, and the necessary experience gained, the character undergoes the First Ceremony of Bonding. The sponsoring deity attempts to Bond the spheres to the character. A character must make a saving throw vs. Death Magic for each sphere to be Bonded to her. If the roll succeeds the Sphere is Bonded to the character. If the roll fails a System Shock must then be rolled. If this roll succeeds, the bond does not take and the Sphere is not attached. At this juncture the character may elect to stop the procedure and earn enough experience points to try to keep this Sphere in the portfolio, or she may continue the ceremony, losing the chance to include that particular Sphere. If the System Shock roll fails the character is annihilated by the coursing of divine energies through her body. When the ceremony is successfully concluded, the following results:

Subj: Re:Ascendency (cont'd 2)
Date: 96-04-21 05:32:43 EDT
From: Tamerlain

continued---

If the character was unable to cast these spells, she gains the ability to cast all spells in the sphere (including quest spells). These spells can be cast as if the character were a 9th level priest (The minimum level necessary to cast 5th level spells the maximum allowable to the priest of a demi-power).

If a character already could cast priest spells, she maintains her previous spell casting level.

The character may only cast spells priest spells from the Bonded spheres even if she had access to more Spheres prior to the final Bonding.

After all spheres have been determined, the character must earn an additional 100,000 experience points for every granted power she wishes to bestow. (These may not be higher than 5th level in nature).

After all granted powers have been determined, the character undergoes the Second Ceremony of Bonding. It operates exactly the same as the First Ceremony except:

Success results in the characters ability to use the Bonded abilities.

After Bonding, the character must abide by all strictures of a 12th level priest utilizing only the abilities that she will later grant as a demipower. (Spells, Attack Rolls, Equipment, and Abilities)

Characters lose, for a time, all non-priest abilities and abilities not related to her future priesthood. However, hit points, saving throws and ability scores remain at the hero-powers normal level.

During this time, the character essentially functions as his own followers might in the future. She is also restricted compared to what she was previously. It is during this time that the character learns how the followers must live. It is also at this time that the hero-deity begins to gain followers. During this time the hero-deity

begins to understand the very natures of her followers. The hero-deity must gain at least 200 followers and 100,000 experience points before continuing on the "Path."

The hero-deity is, at this point, the most vulnerable of any time during the entire ascension process, but by some pact or accord among the Powers, they are only visited by troubles common to all 12th level priests; Yes, she might fight powerful enemies, but she will not be beset by a host of Pit Fiends.

After spending time as one of her own, and gathering a number of followers, the hero-deity has one more choice to make. This is called "The Choice of the Avatar." It determines whether the power will gain the ability to use an avatar at the demipower or lesser power level.

If she desires an avatar at the demipower level, they must gain an extra 300,000 points (in their present priest incarnation). If she chooses to wait to gain an avatar until she is a lesser power, she needs not earn any more experience, but may go to the final step.

The final step of Ascension is the "Third Ceremony of Bonding." In this ceremony, many things occur. First a final saving throw vs. Death Magic is made. This is followed by a mandatory System Shock roll. If either roll fails, the hero-power must earn 250,000 more points before trying again. If both rolls fail, the hero-power is annihilated. If both rolls succeed, a magnificent sign occurs (this could be a loud peal of thunder heard for 100s of miles, an earthquake, a large comet, a booming voice, a whirlwind, a pillar of smoke the DM should use his imagination here). The hero power Ascends (or Descends) into the Astral Plane and passes to her new home Plane (which might well be Oerth if that is what was decided by the sponsoring deity) and the Final Bonding, the bonding with her followers, occurs.

The hero-power becomes a demipower with all requisite portfolios, spheres, and abilities (including the power to grant spells, etc.)

Subj: Re:Ascendency (cont'd 3)

Date: 96-04-21 05:38:00 EDT

From: Tamerlain

continued---

Demi Power

If the hero-power chose to gain an avatar at the demipower level, a spiritual vortex swirls around the power as she ascends and a solid body forms. This is the first avatar. The avatar gains all of hero-deity's original classes, abilities and levels. If the priest class was gained during the "Path", only the abilities of the hero-powers priesthood are gained (at 12th level; however, if the character was originally a priest as a mortal, priest abilities are given at the highest earned level. If other priest-like classes existed (cleric, monk, shaman, etc.) these additional spells and powers are returned as well.

In addition 3/4 of the Hit Points, and the 3 saving throw of the demi-power are obtained by the avatar).

If the hero-power was not a priest originally, the avatar also gains 12th level priest abilities as per the hero-powers followers.

The avatar then gains four additional levels that the DM may divide as he sees fit among those originally held by the power (if this takes avatars levels above 30 that is fine. Avatars will earn 2 additional levels every time a power advances in the future and can attain 40th level well beyond mortal ability. But a power who waits until they are lesser powers before they get an avatar will only be able to field an avatar who is 38th level in the future, at best.)

It is also true that a power need not give an avatar its "maximum" abilities. A power may decide to send an avatar which has only one class, or one of lower level than what it could possibly send.

Enter name of file to Those followers eligible and desirous become 1st level priests of the power. If the new powers portfolio and/or old classes allow, clerics, crusaders, druids, monks, paladins and shaman may also be created under the guidance of the new demipower.

At this point the PC and avatar become NPCs under the control of the DM; the hero-power becomes a demipower and one of the greatest legends of the Flanaess is born.

This event is truly momentous, it has only happened rarely for certain in the history of the Oerth. Vecna managed it, in his lich state. Iuz managed it, despite (or maybe because of) his cambion-tanari heritage. (It is assumed his mother, Yggwilv, helped somehow.) Zagyg the Arch-Mage, apparently did it, as well as Wastri, The Hopping Prophet, and Zuoken. It is also possible that St. Cuthbert, and other heroes of the distant past might have come to power in this manner. At present there are few known quasi-deities and one hero-deity on Oerth.

My next entry is an example of a quasi-deity...and the problems she has run into.

Subj: Johydee
Date: 96-04-21 05:43:41 EDT
From: Tamerlain

JOHYDEE

Quasi-Power, LG
(Priest 20, Thief 20)
ALIASES: Barg Dresh, Master Thief
STRONGHOLD NAME: None
SPONSORING POWERS: Tansha (deceased)
ALLIES: Heironeous
FOES: Syrul, Hextor

Johydee is a beautiful quasi-deity with a bit of a problem. She became a quasi-deity because of her brave deeds: first by freeing her village, from a band of thieves, and then by freeing all of her people from Suel domination. She gained quasi-power status long ago some 1100 years ago. However, she carried with her an artifact that, while being the basis of successes, eventually led to her predicament.

Johydee was participating in her test for Tansha, a lesser Oerdian power of Truth and Justice (and betrothed of Heironeous). Her test was to infiltrate the very household of Syrul (The Suloise power of Lies, Deceit and Treachery) and rescue a captured paladin. Unfortunately, Syrul (aided by Hextor, who desired to hurt his brother even more than he hated his enemies of the Suloise pantheon), caused a great magic which overrode Johydees magic resistance and caused her magical mask to make her forget she was a priestess wearing a magical mask, and help her to believe she was the leader of the original thief gang she helped overthrow.

Tansha, outraged with Hextor for his helping Syrul, challenged him to a mighty arcane duel. But even though she was a puissant lesser power, she was overcome by the more powerful Hextor, (especially when he was aided by Syrul). Tansha was destroyed, and the enmity between Heironeous and his brother increased ten-fold.

Johydee, meanwhile, was trapped in Syruls heartland, not knowing her own identity. Syrul captured her, ensorcelled her, and put her in a stasis on display in the entryway of her abode. Syrul views Johydee as one of her greatest trophies of war. Occasionally, Syrul removes Johydees mask and flings it into the Prime Planes for other mortals to find and use. Johydee, trapped in stasis, can't respond.

Fortunately for Johydee, Heironeous has sworn to recover her in the memory of his betrothed; Even if this takes an eternity.

Johydee appears as a grizzled man with white hair and blue eyes dressed in Old Suloise fashion when she wears the mask. When it is removed, she appears as a beautiful chestnut haired, green-eyed woman in ancient Oerid tribal dress.

AC 10; MV 12; HP 137; THAC0 8 (unmodified); #AT 1
Dmg by weapon
MR 25%; SZ M (5)
STR 15, DEX 17, CON 13, INT 14, WIS 20, CHA 17
SAVING THROWS: PPDM: 2 RSW: 4 PP: 3 BW: 5 S: 4

Johydee can't fight at all, now, and has long been stripped of any magic items for offensive or defensive purposes. However, there has been one very interesting side effect to her exposure to the Artifact known as Johydees Mask for a millennium: she is now, in actuality, the master thief she believed herself to be. In fact she is an oddity in the multi-verse: a lawful good thief. These thieving abilities will remain even when she recovers (if she ever recovers).

In addition to this, her level as a thief has increased. She originally was disguised as a 9th level thief, but she has gained one level per 100 years of captivity.

The other good effect of her captivity is that it has kept her from aging. She still has the great majority of the elven life span granted to quasi-powers to complete their ascension.

Tuerny the Merciless has a similar problem...

Subj: Tuerny
Date: 96-04-21 05:45:30 EDT
From: Tamerlain

TUERNY

(The Merciless)

Quasi-Power, (C)NE

(Mage 24, Thief 9)

ALIASES: None

STRONGHOLD NAME: None

SPONSORING POWER: Erythnul

ALLIES:

FOES: An unidentified Tanarri Prince, .

In the early years after the Oerid migration into the Flanaess, one mighty mage arose. This mage first served as the counselor to one of the many early petty Oerid kinglets. But Tuerny eventually had the royal family put to death, and claimed the crown for himself.

Using his vast magical powers, Tuerny charmed or enslaved most of the army. He was also able to summon foul tanarri and set them loose on the helpless people. It was during this time that Erythnul accepted Tuerny as a candidate quasi-power. Tuerny had little control over the tanarri, so he began crafting a device capable of bending them to his will. He called his device, The Iron Flask of Tuerny the Merciless. This was to be the prototype of the great item he planned to make for his testing. With all in readiness, he summoned forth a great tanarri, took control of it, and imprisoned it in his flask.

Meanwhile, news of Tuernys atrocities reached neighboring kingdoms. They raised great armies to crush Tuerny and his foul minions. These devastating wars lasted years but resolved nothing. Finally, Tuerny opened his bottleonly to have the released, and very angry Tanarri Prince (who is still unidentified) grab him. A blood curdling scream filled the air as Tuerny transformed into a foul and hideous monster and vanished, along with the flask and the creature.

Tuerny is at present a Babau tanarri who serves as a personal servant of one of the Princes of the Abyss. He is used primarily to recruit new forces to serve his master in battle.

He appears as the normal Babau---like a tall skelton covered with dark form-fitting leather, with a great horn protruding from the back of his skull.

It is not certain whether Tuerny can recover from this state if he should, his elven life span is over, so he might immediately be annihilated. Or it might be that this is his test it's hard to say.

AC -3; MV 12; HP 135; THAC0 13 (unmodified); #AT 1 or 3

Dmg: 1d4/1d4/2d4 or by weapon +7

MR 50%; SZ M (7)

STR 19, DEX 16, CON 15, INT 18, WIS 10, CHA 3

SAVING THROWS: PPDM: 6 RSW: 3 PP:5 BW: 6 S: 4

Tuerny has all of the normal powers of a Babau. The enfeebling gaze, the corrosive substance which covers his skin, the ability to gate in other tanarri and the thief skills.

He also has all of the abilities common to Tanarri and the spell casting abilities of a Babau: dispel magic, fear, fly, heat metal, levitate, and polymorph self (each of these may be cast 1x/day). However, Tuerny casts these spells as if he were a 24th level mage. He cannot, however, cast any other spells.

Tuerny, as all Babau, can only be hit with magical weapons.

and, finally, on a brighter note...

Subj: Kelanen

Date: 96-04-21 05:47:57 EDT

From: Tamerlain

KELANEN

(Prince of Swords)

Hero-Power, N

(Fighter 20, Mage 5, Thief 10)

PORTFOLIO GOAL: Swordsmen, Swordsmiths, Swordplay

SPHERES EARNED: Major: Combat, Creation

Minor: Charm, War

ALIASES: None

STRONGHOLD NAME: BladeForge

SPONSORING POWERS: Obad-hai, Tritherion

ALLIES:

FOES:

Kelanen, the Prince of Swords, is a commanding figure. However he often takes great pains to disguise this, traveling as a beggar, a thief, a mercenary, or rogue. In any of these forms he will be unremarkable, sometimes young, sometimes of middle years. He has the power to alter self at will, so he seldom appears in the same form twice, except to show his true form. Each of these forms however, has a marring scar on his face or neck. Kelanen prefers garments of gray or blue-gray with ornaments of silver or platinum.

The true form of Kelanen is that of a youngish, quite handsome man, fair of complexion, with silver-gray eyes (hinting of some distant elven blood) and coal black hair. It is hinted that Kelanens scar was gained during his "Test of Power" when he battled an avatar. His visage bears the long silvery scar from eye to chin on the right side of his face. Those who know Kelanen, recognize him immediately when this mark is revealed. His form is slender and sinewy, his height, just under six feet.

Kelanens permanent abode is in a Spartan stronghold in an extra-dimensional pocket plane. He usually travels on the Prime Material though, be it on Oerth or another parallel world, seeking adventure and engaging in warlike actions which promote the balance of Neutrality.

Kelanen seeks to gain the major sphere of Healing, and the minor spheres of All and Guardian. He has spent much time and many wishes to develop special abilities which will form the basis for his Special Abilities granted to his priesthood, even though he has yet to go through his First Bonding.

AC -5; MV 18; HP 159; THAC0 1 (unmodified); #AT 3
Dmg 1d8 or weapon
MR 30%; SZ M (6)
STR 18/00, DEX 21, CON 18, INT 17, WIS 15, CHA 19
SAVING THROWS: PPDM: 3 RSW: 3 PP: 3 BW: 3 S: 3

Special Att/Def: Kelanen has several abilities which make him a formidable fighter and ally. His chosen weapon is the sword. His expertise is such that he is specialized in every member of the broad group: Swords. He also fights as a Grand Master when using the bastard sword and broad sword. He can use one sword in each hand and incur no penalty to hit. He can furthermore wield a sword as large as a bastard sword (or katana) in one hand as if he were using two hands to wield it.

Kelanen has two special swords which are never far from him. The first, Swiftdom (THAC0 -12, 2d6 [grand mastery]+6[weapon plus]+3 [mastery]+6[Strength]) is a +6 bastard sword flametongue formed of glassteed adamantite. When not aflame, the blade is impossible to parry and always strikes first in a melee round. Furthermore, it has a vampiric power which bestows 1 HP to Kelanen for every 6 points of damage it inflicts (but not above his maximum). The weapon has a 17 intelligence and an ego of 25, but it never seeks to cross Kelanens will. It speaks eight languages and has the following powers: read languages, read magic, telepathy, detect illusions, detect invisible objects, detect magic, and teleportation. The Special Purpose of this blade is to protect Kelanen. Originally it added +2 to his his saves, but now it only reduces damage sustained by Kelanen by -1 per die. This sword is neutral in alignment.

The second sword is Sureguard (THAC0 -12, 2d6 [grand mastery] +6[weapon plus]+3[mastery]+6[Strength]) is a +6 broadsword frostbrand of glassteed adamantite. This sword acts as a dancing defender. The weapon has a 17 intelligence and an ego of 19. It speaks 6 languages and has the following powers: read languages, read magic, telepathy, detect good/evil, detect secret doors, detect traps, duo-dimension. This blade serves Kelanen faithfully.

Subj: Kelanen (2)
Date: 96-04-21 05:49:36 EDT
From: Tamerlain
Posted on: America Online

continued---

Kelanen wears elfin chain and a ring of protection +5. He employs few other protections.

It is purported that Kelanen has no friends or confidants other than his swords. He is 90% likely to be able to summon either one 1x/day.

In addition, Kelanen has the following powers:

Charm Sword: If an opponent bears a sword with an ego, the sword will refuse to attack Kelanen.

Immunity to Special Powers: Although Kelanen may be harmed by swords, he is immune to any special attribute of the blade other than its normal non-magical cutting edge no plusses, flames, vorpal abilities, etc. affect him.

Multiplication: When Kelanen bears a non-intelligent, non-magic sword, he is able to cause it to duplicate itself. After the 1st round of combat a second sword, exactly like the one wielded by Kelanen, appears and commences to combat his enemies as if he were wielding it. This process continues until nine such blades exist, and then reverses, one blade per round disappearing until only the original remains. Kelanen may use this power 1x/day.

Sword Blessing: Kelanen can "bless" any sword so that it gains +1 to hit and damage for 10 rounds. He can do this for as many 20 blades per day (this bonus can be applied to magic blades).

Sword Control: Unless a wielder of a sword is successful saving versus spell, Kelanen can cause a blade to turn against its owner for 1 round (2x/day).

Sword Summoning: In addition to his own swords, Kelanen can summon any sword in sight not held by another being, to come to him.

Kelanen has the abilities of the acrobat kit as well as those designed for fighting.

Note that this is just a slightly modified version of E.Gygax's original from Dragon...

WORSHIP AND DIVINE POWER

Subj: On the Gods (1)

Date: 96-04-25 22:19:03 EDT

From: Tamerlain

The following few entries are things I wrote up, when thinking about the Oerth deities (after having read the F&A for FR)...note that these accounts would not necessarily be how the powers of the several different pantheons on Oerth would account for their existence...they have different agendas and different relationships with their followers.... (This is going to take a bit of space too....)

Worship in the Flanaess

In the Flanaess, the cultural migrations have led to a very broad and intermixed group of pantheons. Some areas, like the almost purely Suloise lands of the Barbarians of the Thillonian Peninsula worship the powers of a single pantheon (although these Barbarians do not worship all of the beings of that pantheon). In other areas, such as the highly Suloise area of the Scarlet Brotherhood, only one power is worshipped. Oddly enough the power worshipped here is not from the Suloise pantheon, but from an older unidentified source. Another odd aspect of the Flanaess faiths is that although good and neutral worshipers of good and neutral powers tend to be polytheistic, worshipping several powers, the worshipers of evil powers tend to worship only one power although these evil worshipers may work to overthrow the several other powers. An exception to this general trend are the worshipers of the evil Suloise power, Wee Jas, who does not appear to desire to be the sole ruling power in her pantheon.

Some non-evil individuals do worship only one power, but these are generally the clerics, priests, paladins, rangers and monks who serve as the clergy or presence temporal of a particular power. These beings are in a sense, petitioners on the Prime. Upon their deaths they are usually rewarded with petitioner status on the home plane of their deity. While good and neutral worshipers tend to become petitioners after evil worshipers generally become pathetic lemures or manes, although truly notable evil followers might find other ends.

Among the rarest of all occurrences in the universe, a mortal may ascend to the heights of deityhood. This happens probably more commonly on Oerth than in any other sphere; here there are four or five personages who have reached the quasi- or hero- power status in the last century or so, and two humans (Vecna, a native of Oerth, and Mayaheine, who arrived from another Crystal Sphere or Plane) who have become demipowers. It is also conjectured that St. Cuthbert was originally a human hero, but if this is so his ascension is lost in the mist of antiquity.

Subj: On the Gods (2)

Date: 96-04-25 22:23:45 EDT

From: Tamerlain

Worship and Divine Power

Much as occurs elsewhere, the rank of a power is related to the number of that power's followers. There are exceptions to this rule. It appears that the dark power, Tharizdun, who is universally feared within the Sphere despite the fact that the number of his worshipers is few. Other exceptions include the quasi-powers, who generally have no followers, but are rather in the process of becoming recognized as powers. Hero-powers have gained some few adherents, but do not yet have a priesthood. Demipowers are the first level to actually gain a clergy and the ability to bestow spells to followers on a daily basis.

As is true in other Crystal Spheres, it appears that powers benefit from forming alliances. In some cases these alliances are familial, such as is the case with Beory and the Green Man. In other cases, it is similarity of goals (such as Aphrodite from the Olympians of Earth and Hanelil Celani of the Seldarin in Arvandor). In some cases it may be simple self-preservation.

The divine essence of powers, and its control and bestowal, except at the very lowest levels (upon ascending mortals), is an uncontrolled process. Although it appears that some powers, especially those involved with Fate and Time, such as Istus and possibly Lendor (and possibly Cyndor in the past) have some ability to manipulate other deities, this is not the general rule. Higher level powers can, of course, effect lower level powers (possibly even killing them). And it is possible that a several deities acting in concert could destroy another. But the several pantheons tend to keep that from happening. The best way to affect a power is through affecting his or her mortal followers (but this isn't even a sure way of denuding a deity of his or her influence.) Generally speaking, deities from GREYHAWK respond to each other and to their followers on the basis of three principles first by alignment, second by spheres of influence, and, third, by pantheon and national affiliation. It is important to remember that this is not how the powers of all worlds and Crystal Spheres interact. The first principle, alignment, governs the moral and ethical choices of the powers. Except in universally singular events, deities do not act against their alignments. They are, in a sense, the living embodiments of these alignments as expressed in several ways (spheres). It is conjectured that the power of alignment drives the universe, and powers gain their immortal essence from this. For a deity to violate alignment causes a imbalance in the very fabric of the multiverse; and the repercussions are severe. Anything from the destruction of the power, to a re-alignment and lessening of power may occur. The former usually occurs when the deity acts volitionally, the latter when the followers of the deity, en masse, begin to re-vision the deity's role and being. The second principle, the principle of spheres of influence (also called the powers Portfolio), governs the affairs of a power. The spheres of concern are connected to the power through varying processes. In the case of the truly ancient deities, spheres were simply manifestations of the powers being. Beory did not choose Oerth as her sphere of influence, nor Istus, fate; it simply was so. Later, during the formation of pantheons, spheres of influence were assigned by the Greater powers to those of less power according to bent of personality (this was true whether a power rises to that station, or was "born" or made). This particular interaction ceased in the distant past, and since then, new powers come to their spheres of influence by choice. As mortals ascend, their life, interest, abilities and concerns help shape their portfolio. As with alignment, mortal followers can influence and change powers in this area.

Subj: On the Gods (3)

Date: 96-04-25 22:26:19 EDT

From: Tamerlain

Worship and Devine Power (cont'd)

If all of the worshipers of a deity stop recognizing a powers control in an area, the power loses interest and control in that area. It is possible, over several millennia, for a power to be completely redefined through this process. In general, powers of similar portfolios have one of two responses to each other. The first is one of guarded friendship (one is never quite sure if another deity of nature has the same outlook as oneself), or of competition (or even hostility), which occurs in cases where alignment differences cause major differences in the perception of the sphere, or in cases where the power is from another pantheon. In cases where a power sponsors an ascending mortal, the relationship is generally very good (unless worshipers start re-visioning one of the two). This third principle, the pantheonic principle, is the least stable principle of the three, was set at the beginning of human time, in a divine pact called The Accord. By this pact, most powers chose to closely relate themselves in ancient pantheon groups allied to mortal tribal groups. But the Accord, to some degree, has broken down. Many of the powers who are recognized as "common" to all people of the Flanaess do not adhere as closely to the call of pantheonic unity as they once did. Their followers have "shaped" them to this. Once, the Bakluni gods were allied across the line against those of the Suel. As the people fought, so did the Powers. This cut across moral compulsion, and even deities of the same alignment were affected, because each saw powers of other pantheons

as interlopers and pretenders, as false representations of alignment. Oddly enough, this did not generally happen between human pantheons and non-human pantheons (although it did between various non-human pantheon groups). When the pantheons were strong, there was normally a chief Power of each, Beory and Rao for the Flan, Istus for the Bakluni, Lendor for the Suel. When the chief power spoke, all members of pantheon were wise to listen, regardless of alignment. This principle explains the extreme enmity between some powers from different pantheons, but it isn't likely that the cross-pantheon rivalries will ever be as intense as they once were.

Areas of Godly Influence

The powers of Oerth have divided influence on the four continents and countless islands which dot the oceans. This influence is normally contained within the region in which specific followers dwell (and is therefore normally contained in ethnic or racial boundaries, but in the case of Eastern Oerik (the Flanaess) this does not always hold true because of the great number of migrations and wars.

This work is only concerned with those pantheons who influence the Flanaess in the history of humanity: the Bakluni, the Flanae, the Oerdian, the Suloise, and the Olman (the Olman were largely driven off of Oerik, and no longer play a large role on this continent.)

Because of this, the Flanaess is home to several powers from several pantheons who have similar portfolios, and whose followers may either fiercely compete (even if of the same alignment), or who may get along very well. Usually, it is the followers of the Suloise Powers and the Bakluni powers who have the most strife in inter-pantheon struggles.

Other powers form relationships based on alignment or interest, with good powers generally getting along with each other and evil powers forming alliance to gain advantage. In some instances there are great animosities between powers of the same pantheon. These are generally problems caused by alignment, as is the case in the struggle between Hextor and Hieroneous.

Subj: On the Gods (4)

Date: 96-04-25 22:28:34 EDT

From: Tamerlain

Pantheons and the Accord

In the beginnings of Greyspace, there came into existence a group of beings now called Proto-powers. (I DON'T explain how this happened...there should be some true mystery somewhere!!!!)

(Sam, GMTA!!!! I was really surprised to see you have a similar idea!)

During this time, these beings were actually were potentials in action. They created and formed the faces of the planets and the ecologies of each. These Proto-powers experienced many of the same strifes and joys as mortals. They fought, they loved, they created and destroyed, they even gave birth to young. While some were born, others were annihilated in the struggles that took place between these various beings.

However, this state of existence changed with the arrival of the Ancient Voyagers and their Powers to Greyspace. The first of these arrivals were the elves. These were followed by dwarves, gnomes and the humanoids. They arrived from other Crystal Spheres and they brought with them the influence of their Powers. By and large, the Proto-powers of Greyspace and these Non-human powers did not interact, as the primary interest of the Non-human deities were concerned with their peoples with which the Proto-powers had little to do. Exceptions did occur, when a Proto-powers interests and alignments were very similar to a non-human powers friendships grew. The intrusions of the new Powers, however, did limit the Proto-powers activities in Greyspace. No one Proto-power could withstand the combined might of a Non-human pantheon. When a mandate to leave a forest of elves, or mountain fastness of dwarves alone, the Proto-powers complied.

It was then that humans appeared. Whether they were imported from other Crystal Spheres, or created by the Proto-powers themselves is not clear, the stories are many and confused and the powers themselves will not say. But this occurrence forever changed the shape of reality in Greyspace. The Proto-powers call this the Time of the Accord. Groups of deities allied with tribes of humans, and formed the Pantheons which were revered by mortals for ages. The Accord also included Non-human Powers and limited the amount of crossover between human and non-human followers of a deity could seek. The proto-powers, gaining followers, increased in might until they were on par with the Non-human deities, and in many cases surpassed them.

Of all of the proto-powers and powers in all of Greyspace, one refused The Accord. He drew followers from all races, and all tribes. His name was Tharizdun.

Since The Accord there have been few new deities arrive from "the outside." The clannish and Oerth-centric nature of Oerth denizens is reflected in its powers as well as its mortals. Mayaheine is the first recorded "human" power known to have come to Oerth from "the outside," and it is conjectured her appearance is solely due to three factors:

1. The rampant spread of evil in the Flanaess;
2. The incapacitation of St. Cuthbert due to his interference with the Iuz/Vecna debacle and his maintaining of the members of the Circle of Eight even though Vecna apparently destroyed them (see Vecna Lives), and,
3. The fact that Kelanen had not yet ascended to demipower status at the time of the Greyhawk Wars. Mayaheine was probably allowed influence on Oerth to make up for the imbalance caused by the vacuum on the side of good and neutral (it is conjectured that Rao, Istus or even Beory herself had a hand in this).

Subj: God Awful Problem

Date: 96-04-29 15:33:02 EDT

From: Iquander

You know, I like to think that I can look at each TSR "innovation" objectively. I'm dying to run a Greyhawk campaign with a Flan Shaman in the party, and I'm also impressed (for the most part) by some of the new challenges and details the Planescape campaign can offer for my games on Oerth. Similarly, Al-Qadim offers some interesting suggestions to flesh out the Bakluni lands. But then there are some things that absolutely _do not_ fit the World of Greyhawk.

One of these things is this malarkey about the power of a god being directly related to the number of worshippers that god has.

Right. Give me a break. This sort of reasoning might hold true in realms like Planescape, where it was taken into account from the very start. With that setting's "dead gods" floating through the ether, it in fact seems to fit very well. Greyhawk, I should not have to state, is older than this theological retcon, and therefore I'm totally unwilling to reconstruct my Oerth just to fit the company line in this case.

Let's look at the facts. There are two obvious cases as to why this does not hold true on Oerth: Boccob and Tharizdun.

Boccob is not a greater power because he has the most clerics, he is a greater power because, simply put, he is a great being. For all intents and purposes, Boccob _created_ magic, and its implied that he has a hand in its workings even today. But this does not attract a sizable clergy. In fact, Boccob is called "the Uncaring" in part because it is said that the body of his worshippers interests him not at all.

If we are to retcon this to stick with this idea that everyone here seems to be so fond of, we have to come up with ridiculous statements like "Well, Boccob must be worshipped on 40,000 worlds. . ." come on. Beory, the "OERTH MOTHER" is a greater power, and it's difficult to suggest that she is honored on any world other than Oerth.

Let's take a minute to look at a quote from Gyax: "In general, the greater gods are too far removed from the world to have much to do with humanity, and while they are worshipped, few people hold them as patrons."

I take the above quote to mean that, though there are worshippers of the greater gods, their numbers are few. The average man of the Flanaess does not, say, worship Beory, but he concedes that she is the soul of the Oerth. Certainly, there are exceptions (Pelor being the most obvious, though Nerull is highly worshipped, as well), but generally, the greater gods are more "acknowledged" than worshipped or even followed.

Which brings us to Tharizdun. The last of his priests (excepting perhaps some holdouts in the Scarlet Brotherhood) dies long ago in an abandoned temple in the Yatils. He has, functionally, ZERO worshippers, and yet he is still powerful enough to make the entire Oerth shake in terror. Indeed, he is listed among the Greater Gods, and though he cannot directly influence the world, it is foolish to assume that he is out of the game.

By the new canon, Tharizdun would dwindle to nothing, alone in his demiplane of imprisonment. Without the worshippers so needed by 2nd Edition deities, he is done for. But then, of course, The Whispered One, He Who Shall Forever Sleep, the god who even today is considered evil itself, will soon have a lot of company among the Greyhawk pantheon.

This rationalization doesn't work, folks. Like the ban on Monks and Assassins, it starts to unintentionally chip away at the foundation of the planet. While that might be something that gets your motors revving, it doesn't interest me one whit.

Iquander

Subj.: Tharizdun & Spells
Date: 12/03/1996 18:16:45
From: Belvor X

Tharizdun has the power to grant high level spells but he cannot due to his imprisonment. Tharizdun is not a true demi-god he is he restrained MAJOR god. The power of Tharizdun is greater in some evil places as well as near some objects of Powers. The Scarlet has recovered one part (or perhaps two) of the Rod of three part. That Rod is the key to free Tharizdun and it lets some bits of power escape from it.

As you know all, bits of infinity are infinite so a tremendous power emanates from the Rod.

In my own campaign, the Scarlet Brotherhood can be compared to Drow in the way that they are powerful in and near their source of power. That explains why priests remain(ed) in their home country and sent assassins, thieves and fighters over the world.

The Priests of Tharizdun have to be near or impregnated with the Dark emanations from the Rod (or another item, if the Rod does not fit into your campaign).

I also see the Scarlet Brotherhood as a bunch of Psionics. Not powerful psionics (I dislike them) but with some powers nonetheless.

The first power required to be a priest of Tharizdun in the Scarlet Brotherhood is a kind of energy transfer. "Energy transfer" creates a link with other individuals and allows the priests to tap into the Dark emanations even if they are far from homeland. (If you dislike the psionics more than I, you can even imagine that the Brotherhood owns another Object of Power that sends Spell Energy toward attuned Unholy symbols)

I have no rule for that energy transfer but it allows a priest to regain his spell and is my DM secret explanation for granting spells above second level to priests of Tharizdun

Subj.: Re: Tharizdun & Spells
Date: 13/03/1996 00:54:22
From: QSamantha

This is an excellent explanation of the Tharizdun cleric spell problem. The clerics are severely limited unless hooked up to a dark power source. Very clean. Very elegant. And it ties up all the loose ends. You sold me.:

Qsamantha

Subj: Re:God Awful Problem
Date: 96-04-29 19:53:10 EDT
From: Tamerlain

Iq,

I'm in 100% agreement here...despite my efforts to codify the quasi- and hero- deities (they are special cases anyway...). The gods simply are. Some are more powerful, some less, and sometimes they move around (although it might be interesting to see what would happen if a culture in which a god was worshipped were completely annihilated...It might be argued that the god would still be there, but he wouldn't make much of an impact on the other cultures...or that if he did, no one would recognize his influence for what it was. Oh, and about Boccob...I think Wee Jas might argue about his being the creator of magic a Wee bit. Again, the problem (or rather uniqueness) of multiplicity of pantheons rears its head. :)

Steve

VATUN

Subj: Vatun revisited
Date: 96-04-23 08:49:05 EDT
From: DTorsiello

The recent talk of ascension, divinity, etcetera, has rekindled some the classic questions in my mind surrounding the origins of Vatun. I went back and re-read some of the old posts the last time this came up and came up with a possible outline of Vatun's life.

I decided to put his birth at, say, 198 CY-- connecting it to the sighting of that ball of fire of the south of the Great Kingdom (obviously, the comet symbolized something other than "wealth, strife and a living death"-- for the barbarous Suel peoples, anyway.) One of the barbarian legends states that Kord often beds mortal women, and many barbarians lay claim to literally being a "Son of Kord." I think it would make sense that if Vatun were born a demigod and would later become a hero of the Suel barbarians inhabiting the northeastern fringes of the Flanaess, Kord would be the most logical choice for him to have a familial connection with, since Kord is the god these people most revere. Legend also has it that Wee Jas has often sought to seduce Kord and has always been rejected by the grim god, so it would make sense that she would resent Vatun's existence and seek to destroy him. It was she, then, who used her magical powers to somehow discredit him and force him to undertake "the Path of Doom" (credit to Psychlops for the phrase) five times; learning the skills of the thief, the skald, the druid, and the ranger in addition to the warrior in order to gain the Five Swords of Corusk and thereby regain his lost honor. (In case you can't tell, I took the 12 labors of Hercules as inspiration for this.) He was successful in completing the appointed tasks and won much fame and adoration amongst the barbarian people as a result.

Of course, Wee Jas' fury only grew. At last, she conspired with Syrul (who would, ironically, be Vatun's grandmother in this scenario), Beltar and perhaps Pyremius and tricked the demigod into allowing himself to be placed under a powerful stasis spell. The evil gods then sealed him off in some demi-plane. Why didn't they simply kill him outright? Perhaps being a demigod and being so widely revered made that impossible, somehow. Perhaps being the blood kin of Syrul would have made the act too sinful for even gods of evil to commit without consequences (fratricide is a major taboo in nearly every culture). Or perhaps they feared retribution from Kord and thought it would be safer to capture him alive-- then if all else failed, he could still be used as a bargaining chip.

Subj: Vatun pt. 2
Date: 96-04-23 08:50:19 EDT
From: DTorsiello

Unbeknownst to them however, Kord was prescient enough to foresee their treachery and left an enchantment upon the Five Blades of Corusk that would allow Vatun to be summoned back to Oerth when the proper ceremony was performed. The evil gods realized this too late, but Syrul-- goddess of lies and deception-- still managed to scatter the swords to the four winds and casts spells over them that made them undetectable by divinatory magics.

At any rate, Vatun's disappearance occurred shortly after he succeeded in uniting the barbarian tribes and planning a war of conquest. So when the next campaigning season finally rolled around and Vatun wasn't present to prevent bickering and in-fighting, the Coltens Feodality (what is today Stonefist) pulled out of the alliance of Fruzt, Schnai, and other "mercenary barbarians" who invaded the Great Kingdom's North Province in 356 CY. The barbarians' subsequent defeat at the hands of the Great Kingdom led to much lamentation over the loss of Vatun. This, in turn, is what led to the birth of the legend that if Vatun ever returned, he would lead the barbarian tribes to a war of conquest over their enemies; bringing them their redemption and their revenge. Legend also has it that he would be powerful enough to vanquish Iuz, and this is most probably true. However, there is no great magical secret to this-- more practically, Vatun is simply powerful enough to kick Iuz's ass, plain and simple.

I've kept this a very bare outline in order to allow others to contribute their ideas. I'm anxious to hear what different takes people may have on this fascinating enigma called Vatun.

-DT

KELANEN

Subj: Kelanen 1
Date: 96-03-27 17:10:31 EDT
From: SEPieper

Kelanen
"The Prince of Swords", "The Sword Lord"
Hero-Deity N

Symbol: Silver or Platinum Nine Swords in a Starburst
Raiments: Grey or Blue-Grey
Portfolio: Swords and Swordsmanship
Worshipper's Alignment: Any
Priest's Alignment: Any Neutral
Requirements: STR 12 and DEX 15
Weapons Allowed: Any Sword
Armor Allowed: Any
Major Spheres: All, Charm, Combat, Guardian, and Protection
Minor Spheres: Divination, Elemental, Healing, Summoning, Weather
Additional Spells: Sword Control and Summon Sword
Magical Items: As Priest or Fighter
Turn Undead: No
(Note: Priests of Kelanen are only able to cast spells of up to Fifth level due to his hero-Deity status.)

Granted Powers:

- 1) These priests may take weapon specialization with any sword as if they were a fighter.
- 2) The priests may fight two-handed without penalty (as a ranger) as long as both weapons are swords.
- 3) At third level, the priests may cast, once per day, a Bless spell. This spell may only be used to bless swords.
- 4) At Fifth level, the priest may cast a form of Charm spell, in which any intelligent sword it is cast upon will refuse to harm the caster. This power is usable once per day.
- 5) At Ninth level, the priest becomes immune to all special powers of magical swords (i.e. cold, flame, magical pluses or powers). For example a Vorpal Sword will not, under any circumstances, sever the head of such a priest.

cont.

Subj: Kelanen 2
Date: 96-03-27 17:24:07 EDT
From: SEPieper

Kelanen's Priest's:

Calling themselves "The Blades of the Lord", Kelanen's priests tend to be loners. They wander the countryside seeking adventure and aggressively promoting the balance. Not known to be timid; the blades often times stick their swords into other's business, whether asked or not.

Many of the blades ritually scar their faces to honor their lord, and are thus easily recognizable.

Since the priests tend to loners and wanderers, there are few areas in the Flanaess where a sizable number of worshippers of the Sword Lord have congregated. The exceptions to this are the Hold of the Sea Princes, where Kelanen is worshipped by large percentage of the upper classes and nobility, and the town of Elredd on the Wild Coast. Before the Wars major temples to Kelanen existed in both of these areas.

Now that both the Hold and Elredd have fallen into the hands of evil, the surviving blades have taken it upon themselves to lead the resistance against the conquerors. Not a few Pomarj Orcs and wearers of the Scarlet Sign have tasted the steel of an angry blade.

cont.

Subj: Kelanen 3
Date: 96-03-27 17:32:44 EDT
From: SEPieper

Kelanen (The Prince of Swords)

Sages disagree whether the Sword Lord is a true deity or one of those immensely powerful individuals who have achieved a type of Quasi-divine status. Thus Kelanen is labeled a hero-Deity. Whatever the truth, many swordsmen and not a few rogues-who live more by the sword than by thievery worship Kelanen. A select few have granted the ability to cast spells.

A loner, Kelanen has no know friends or confidants, save his two swords-Swiftdoom and Sureguard. He is seldom seen without them and is known to be able to summon either of them, no matter where he might be.

The true appearance of the Prince of Swords is that of a slim, wiry and handsome young man with silvery-grey eyes and black hair; although he prefers not to appear that way. He prefers the appearance of a non-descript beggar, thief or mercenary. No matter what form he appears in, Kelanen will always have a long, silvery scar on the right side of his face. This scar was the result of the many tests and challenges he had to endure in becoming the Prince of Swords.

Kelanen lives in his stronghold on an extra-dimensional pocket plane, though he spends much of his time wandering the Prime material Plane seeking to promote the balance of Neutrality. Unlike most keepers of the balance, Kelanen is aggressive in his cause and is unafraid to use warlike actions to further the balance. One such instance of this was in 505CY when he joined with Zagyg, St. Cuthbert, Heward, Murlynd, and Keoghtom to imprison Iuz in the dungeons beneath Castle Greyhawk.

I hope you like it. Since there is little info on Kelanen out there, I had little to go on.
I hope it works.

Steve

End Best of Greyhawk #13
