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GREYHAWK ADVENTURES

HORROR IN GREYHAWK

By TSR Roger

Subj: Horror in Greyhawk, part 1

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QSamantha shamed me into commenting on Psicosis79's vampire campaign in the Flanaess. I agree that the GH campaign can easily support horror role-playing that differs from the RAVENLOFT campaign's Gothic horror. The foes in the GH campaign are powerful but do not control the world. They merely *wish* to control the world. In Lovecraft's Cthulhu mythos (and the <Call of Cthulhu> game), the insane, evil gods once owned Earth and now want it back. In the GH setting, the evil demon princes and archdevils and all never owned Oerth, but they've had a taste of it and they want more. They are in intrusive element, foes who won't go away and will continue to poke and probe until they find a weak spot, and then they're HERE.

I am not running a GH campaign right now, but if I wanted to add horror to it on a permanent basis, I believe it would work great, though it will certainly change the feel of the world a bit. There are certain places in the land that would benefit greatly from horror DMing: the Vault of the Drow (and the rest of the Underdark), the Tomb of Horrors, any old ruins, the remnants of Aerdy, Iuz's lands (more like Nazi Germany to my thinking), the Scarlet Brotherhood lands, Vecna cults, etc.

I would go to the RAVENLOFT boxed set and get out the <Realm of Terror> book, then copy the whole section on "Techniques of Terror" (1st Edition RoT, pages 129-137; 2nd Edition RoT, pages 138-146). After that, I'd get the first RAVENLOFT MC and copy out the section "Encounters in Ravenloft." After that, I'd find a copy of DRAGON issue #162 and copy out the "Game Wizards" piece by Bruce Nesmith on additional techniques of horror role-playing. This material is possibly the most complete and useful set of DM's guidelines for horror role-playing ever printed, IMHO. Simply apply the techniques to your GH campaign and check the results.

Some of the DM's techniques for getting horror into an RPG setting show up clearly, I believe, in the film <Alien>. Translate the plot and setting into a GH adventure. For instance....

A group of heroes is sent out to a distant ruin, say White Plume Mountain, to investigate its possible use by Iuz in his wars. (WPM was in the Bandit Kingdoms, now part of Iuz's lands.) The PCs must take an NPC scribe/officer with them who will authenticate their reports. The scribe is a quiet, unobtrusive sort who seems on the level. Regarding WPM, the DM has revamped the whole place--no more giant crab, etc. It's now a real ruin, a really creepy one. Iuz had the old management destroyed in awful ways, and has now turned the place over to some wizards who want to do some nasty experiments. Their experiments have blown up in their faces, and something bad now exists there.

The DM arranges for the PCs to be inconveniently isolated at WPM by a severe thunderstorm and flooding (technique: isolation). The DM has created some monsters that invade the minds of victims in their sleep, creating false "dream realities" that make it hard to tell what's real from what's not; the group's +5 armor and swords are useless (technique: exploit vulnerabilities).

The dream monsters are not immediately visible and won't be met right away, though the results of their preying on the wizards of WPM are horrifically visible (technique: keeping the real horror hidden, avoiding direct confrontations). The DM adds a few minor to mid-level monsters, altered by the dream beasts to behave in frightening manners--a dog ignores the group, responding to unseen stimuli (it is hallucinating), but when bothered, it attacks the group with +2 bonuses from ferocity, seeming to change into a mad beast until it is slain (technique: warping the familiar). Attempts to mind-read hallucinating beings causes the mind-reader to become "infected" by the dream beasts' powers, though this won't be immediately obvious (technique: turning "safe" actions into "dangerous" ones to expand vulnerabilities).

Once deep inside WPM, one or more PCs are trapped on a lower level and cannot escape (technique: entrapment to face horrors), with flooding occurring throughout WPM's lower levels from the insane thunderstorm outside. Exhausted, the PCs may attempt to flee the dungeon. Perhaps they find the tomes and items once used to summon and attempt to control the dream monsters, which were to have been used against Nyron and the Urnst states (until the "accident" happened and the wizards were wiped out). Worse, the NPC scribe/officer turns out to be bogus, a special agent with a magically buried agenda in his head to return with the beast-summoning items at any cost (even the PCs' lives), to be delivered to the person who sent the PCs on their mission. The items, however, attract the dream beasts, and so are trapped and extremely dangerous. The NPC is super-powered and extremely dangerous.

Even when the PCs get out of WPM, the dream beasts are with them, waiting to prey on the PCs when they

sleep so long as the summoning items still exist and are present with the group. The PCs must somehow face down the beasts using the items and shut them back into their own dimension, to prevent their multiplying and taking over Oerth. How that is to be done is up to the DM.

That's my take on horror role-playing in the Flanaess. It works great, I agree, and I'm sorry I didn't pick up on it earlier. Roger

One point made in the RAVENLOFT guidelines for DMing horror is that the DM is free to lie (um, well, exaggerate) to the players when events in the campaign are moving very fast and tension is high. "That purple thing on your arm is as big as my hand!" says the DM, holding up her hand and spreading her fingers. "You can see its fangs raised to sink into your flesh!" Well, the purple thing is about two inches across, really, and it has no fangs, just odd front legs. It's harmless. But the player will freak out. If the DM is challenged later, when the purple thing is squashed/fireballed/stabbed and found to be someone's odd pet, well, hey, it would certainly LOOK dangerous if it surprised you, wouldn't it?

In addition, play out encounters with creatures in completely unexpected and attention-snatching ways. For example, the PCs are in the city of Dyvers, exhausted and trying to sleep. One of them (DM's pick) wakes up, unable to rest. He is told that he hears nothing in the stillness of the night. But he suddenly smells something awful, like something is rotting right under his bed. He gets up to cry out to the group. BLAM!!! Long, filthy arms smash through the flimsy wall next to his head and grab him, trying to pull him through the wall! It's a troll, its footsteps magically silenced, but the DM doesn't say that. Instead, all the PCs can see are the immense arms, tearing their friend through the wall. It's almost pitch dark, so maybe the rubbery arms look like tentacles. And the PCs can't use fire! They're on the second floor of the inn, which is all wood, and dozens will perish in the flames. But the troll has drunk a potion of fire resistance, so it will be immune to normal fires anyway! If this is played right, there will be PCs leaping from high windows and everything, not a one of them knowing what the heck's up.

There are some places where horror role-playing won't work in GH, like modules EX1 and EX2. But after the Greyhawk Wars, or after some dreadful event like the plague in Aria13's Flanaess, horror role-playing would probably knock the group's socks off.

As some final thoughts, I wouldn't connect GH campaigns too closely with the demiplane of Ravenloft. There will be horror enough on the world without having to find it elsewhere.

I wanted to add a couple of things. The best fantasy-horror books I remember reading were things like <The Face in the Frost>, by John Bellairs. The scene with the cloak in the cellar nearly caused me to have a coronary. Study this book for the ways in which horrific, genuinely frightening scenes are created and sustained. I also liked some books by William Hope Hodgson, like <The Boats of the Glen Carrig> (very useful if the PCs wish to explore the giant sargasso region in the Solnor Ocean, written about in the 1983 GH boxed set.

I also loved <Carnacki the Ghost Finder>, from which elements could be studied and borrowed for GH adventures. And I really would study the movie <Alien>; it is one of the most thorough horror films done, I think. I wouldn't make up Alien-clones for the Flanaess, but I would play some of the regular monsters in this manner to make them more horrific, especially the undead. There were also some good short non-RAVENLOFT horror modules in DUNGEON Adventures that would fit perfectly into a GH campaign. I'll look these up for a later post.

I think Psicosis79 is right that a good horror campaign can be set up in the Flanaess. After the Greyhawk Wars, it may be the best way to play things out. Roger

I got to thinking about the old (not the new) "Twilight Zone" episodes and one that really threw me out of my seat was "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet." What if one of the PCs saw something that no one else could see? Maybe no one else is around when IT appears, or the PC has accidentally/unknowingly rendered himself able to see astral/ethereal objects, and the monster can see the PC, too. I created a special undead monster for a Realms MC, the lhiannan-shee (based on the Celtic undead) that was a ghost that preyed only on bards. She could not be seen by anyone else, and no one else could harm or track her (easily, anyway).

A spirit-monster that preyed on psionicists or wizards would be cool, especially if no one else knows it is around or can see it. The DM could just pass notes to the player affected, which effectively isolates him/her from the group, and never describe the creature openly. The wizard/psionicist is hallucinating, the group might think, believing the DM is being cruel and just toying with the PC. But suppose the monster drains the PC's hit points, one per day, without the PC knowing it. (The DM keeps a separate record of the PC's hp.) If the PC is wounded, he gets more tired than he thinks he should. He might even collapse in a fight with 0 hp, near death, when the player thinks the PC has 20 hp left to go.

I thumbed through some of my DUNGEON Adventures collection, and here are a few modules that could be placed in the Flanaess with little trouble and run using horror techniques:

issue #57: "Cloaked in Fear" (short, starts low-key, builds well).
issue #43: "Jacob's Well" (ghastly, violent; true to <Alien> style).
issue #35: "The Ghost of Mistmoor" (plays out well).
issue #35: "Twilight's Last Gleaming" (involved, long play, adds Plane of Shadows).
issue #31: "Beyond the Glittering Veil" (very involved, long play, adds psionics).
issue #29: "Through the Night" (short, misleading, huge impact).

With a few changes to remove it from the Ravenloft demiplane, "Horror's Harvest" from issue #38 could do ugly things to GREYHAWK campaign players' sanity ratings. Roger

I was hoping to see more discussion on role-playing horror in GH games. I think the GH campaign easily encompasses horror; it was pointed out a year ago here that the Flanaess seems to be constantly fighting off incursions of evil influences from the outer planes, so horror is highly appropriate. But I don't think it is the only true way to play a GH scenario.

If I had to pick out a mental/emotional/perceptual element that the early published GH adventures share, I'd have to say that there is much about the world that is not known, and discovery of the unexpected is a key issue. It's more than gates to partial planes or dead gods' tombs or insane cultists (though they certainly help). There is a lot about the world itself that isn't known, which feeds the horror element but, without horror, also makes the world mysterious. For me, the world is less mysterious with the more I know about it. This is good for a DM but not for the players, as overfamiliarity with a setting leads to boredom.

The question, then, is which DM's tactics should be used to keep up this sense of "unknowability," the sense of mystery in the world. This will produce awe in players as well as horror, which is good.

I went back and reread some of Aria13's posts about her Plague-GH campaign, which intrigued me. We published an article in DRAGON issue #138 (a Halloween issue) called "The End of the World," in which it was suggested that an out-of-control or boring campaign can be radically transformed by introducing an unstoppable plague. After the plague consequences are played out, the campaign can pick up again in a new form, the world no longer so well known or boring.

Using a plague as the background to a horror campaign would be very effective, I would think. Barbara Tuchman's <A Distant Mirror> and Daniel Defoe's <A Journal of the Plague Year> supply enormous amounts of playable information for setting up such a campaign.

Even without a plague, the <From the Ashes> set-up offers a great backdrop to a horror campaign. I agree with others here that <FtA> is a logical development from earlier GH threads, in Gary's writings and elsewhere, and it brings things to a head to intensify the background and emotional impact of the campaign. Roger

KORAVIA

By QSamantha

Subj: Koravia Intro

Date: 96-01-28 16:56:17 EST

Okay. We've been talking horror. Here's what I've done. In several spots on the WoG map there are big areas of nothing, usually part of one extensive terrain feature or another. What I've done in these areas is to create my own lands and kingdoms, usually to add something to WoG that I think would be neat but that wasn't there to begin with. One such area is Koravia.

When Ravenloft came out I thought it was cool but quickly discovered that I did not care for the haphazard way RL adventures were to be run, basically entering and exiting RL like a revolving door. Similarly, the Lands of the Core made a poor setting for a campaign just in RL because they were never designed for that. So, I took RL to WoG and created Koravia.

In Koravia, if I want RL adventures or a mini-campaign, I can get them. But WoG awaits to offer both support and a contrast, both of which RL by itself lacks.

Thus, I created a new WoG realm in a fat area of the Crystalmists. I've used this technique to carve other new realms as well, usually to incorporate things WoG doesn't have immediately available but definitely not necessarily all Ravenloftish.

Hope you like this one.

QSamantha

Koravia

In all the Flanaess, there is no land darker than dread Koravia. A mountainous realm of fair size, all other realms pale next to the evil that is the Land of the Raven. Outwardly, the land displays its sinister character for all to see. Winters are long and harsh, summers all too short and always there is a hint of autumn in the air, foreshadowing the return of the cold. The skys of Koravia are almost always filled with dark and lowering clouds that scud across the sky. Dominated by rolling plains set amidst the secluded valleys of the deep Crystalmists, there is a stark, windswept beauty to the place that suggests that things were not always as they now appear.

Six great cities dot the bleak landscape. Each is old, with weathered stone walls, winding streets and densely packed buildings that lean fantastically over the thoroughfares. The inhabitants go grimly about their business, hurrying with a determination born of the knowledge that life and the season are short, and too often harsh. A miserly prosperity is the rule among the middle and upper classes. The lower class are serfs, doomed to lives of bitterness, for they suffer the brunt their masters' dark predations. Koravia is ruled by the thirsty dead.

No capital has Koravia and no king. The darkest of Darklords is Korvus, the last of the line of Kings that ruled the land before the coming of the dim times. How he joined the ranks of the undying is a story lost in the mists of time and thought best forgotten by those having heard the tale. No certain knowledge exists as to the nature of the Darkest Lord. He is neither seen nor heard, but his presence is everywhere felt. Korvus rules Koravia through the black offices of the Elder Conclave.

The members of the Elder Conclave are the rulers of the six major cities of Koravia. Each is a powerful vampire and a Darklord in their own right. However, their powers as Darklords extend only to the cities they rule. While they may leave their domains and travel freely within the borders of Koravia, those borders may not be crossed. That multiple Dark Lords can exist in such a fashion is a testament to Korvus's awesome might.

The leadership of the Conclave rests with the eldest vampire, Mithzrin, ruler of the city of Vorclaw. As Korvus chooses to absent himself from the day to day rulership of his domain, perhaps more myth than fact, Mithzrin, as leader of the Conclave, is the defacto ruler of Koravia. While the Conclave's chambers are located in Vorclaw in an immense black fortress, each major city hosts a meeting of the Conclave once a year. These meetings are closed and ostensibly secret. However, such a gathering of evil cannot be hidden. Weather in the host city is freakishly abnormal. Tempers grow short. Cows give no milk and chickens refuse to lay. Mysterious disappearances abound. It is said that even the wounds of the injured heal more slowly if at all.

What follows are details on the members of the Elder Conclave, Korvus and the vampire Crysthellos, the principle agent of the Conclave outside the borders of Koravia.

Koravia is located in the mountains west of Geoff and Sterich. It is not intended that player characters directly confront any of the Conclave. Rather, the Conclave provides a framework around which adventures can be designed. Foiling the Conclave's, or one of its members plans, should be far easier than any attempt to destroy these

NPC's.

Korvus

Entillian Korvus was the seventh son of the seventh son of the next to last king of old Koravia, a fair sized but loosely organized realm. A meticulous youth, Korvus disliked the chaotic court of the king. He believed that any kingdom worthy of that appellation should be firmly ruled. Possessed of the courage of his convictions, Korvus grew to believe that he would make an ideal ruler; organized, disciplined and dispassionate. Unfortunately, he was 153rd in line for the throne when he reached his majority.

The world might have never heard from Korvus had it not been for a chance hunting accident. Thrown from his horse, Korvus was grievously injured. While a common man's son might have been allowed to die, no expense was spared to save the life of a royal heir. Korvus lived but in a twisted and shattered body. Determined to find a way to regain his health, Korvus began to read extensively. In the great library, on the farthest shelf, in the darkest corner, he found a moldering tome of darkness that spoke of dark forces and the great powers they could bestow - at a price. Korvus was seduced.

The Court was shortly astonished by the prince's miraculous recovery and dazzled by his displays of magical prowess. Fascination was short lived when the prince used the opportunity to speak of matters about which he should have had no opinion, being now 175th in line for the throne. Korvus was rebuffed. Then the deaths began. Not all at once and none the same way, the royal family was struck down, seemingly at random.

Over the next seven years Korvus brought about the death of every member of his extensive family, lead on by the dark tome. So much killing made Korvus numb to the act and his final murders were truly bizarre and grotesque beyond all description. Having eliminated everyone that stood in his way, Korvus finally became king. Instituting his plan for the reorganization of the kingdom proved a daunting task. In no time, Korvus was facing a civil war. With his keen intelligence, Korvus knew he could not win but the book offered a way out.

Invoking the Dark Powers, Korvus committed ritual suicide in a horrifying perversion of the coronation ritual, bonding him to his realm as a ghost. Korvus became the land but to his shock the land changed to reflect his evil. He won the undying power to remake his land but found the land transformed beyond all recognition. The realization of the trap into which he had walked snapped a mind not fully sane.

Korvus is an immensely powerful ghost, completely mad and a raving paranoid. He fancies himself the perfect ruler and political manipulator, not revealing himself to avoid betrayal and opposition. Other Darklords are allowed in his realm and their actions subtly controlled. The bond with the land worked by the manner of his death allows Korvus to control the power of the tributary Dark Lords. Korvus is pleased that the members of the Conclave have brought the vast majority of his domain under their firm control and it is he that plants expansionist ideas in their minds. As Koravia grows so does Korvus' power. The ultimate megalomaniac, Korvus dreams of world conquest. When Koravia spans the globe, he will reveal himself as Korvus, The Raven King, and none shall stand before his fearful might.

Frighteningly, Korvus may achieve his goals if not stopped. His minions are full fledged Dark Lords. While they may be defeated or destroyed, Korvus' presence remains undetected. Because of his bond with the land, he cannot be truly destroyed. Only the rituals of the dark tome which he consulted offer any hope for his destruction. However, Korvus may be defeated. He is extremely susceptible to the attributes and regalia associated with lawful kingship.

Korvus cannot harm true kings in any way and will flee from their presence. Anyone of royal blood wearing a coronation crown can raise from the dead anyone slain by Korvus in the last 1d6 turns. Swords of state are treated as +6 holy avengers if used against him. Coronation rings act as +4 rings of protection, the bonus applicable to all saving throws. Coronation robes act as cloaks of invisibility, shielding the wearer from being detected by Korvus. Royal scepters are treated as maces of disruption, except that Korvus reanimates in 1d20 days if disrupted. Royal orbs negate Korvus's ability to cause fear. However, anyone attempting to use any of these items against Korvus must have some royal blood in their veins, otherwise there is no special effect. Parties who fail to discover this latter fact are in for a rude surprise. If confronted with royal regalia by someone not of royal blood, Korvus flies into an inhumane rage, doing maximum damage when he hits and is unaffected by the item. Korvus is a 5th magnitude ghost per Van Richten's Guide to Ghosts.

Mithzrin

Mithzrin is the oldest vampire in Koravia. He joined the ranks of the undead centuries before Korvus was born. Though the exact details of his deathless existence are not known, what is known is that he was born of humble parents and entered upon a religious life. First turning from the path of righteousness to serve a dark power, Mithzrin was old and near death when he was turned into a vampire at the behest of his deity in a ceremony of evil communion. Proving no more faithful to his new deity than his old, Mithzrin renounced his beliefs and set about

acquiring temporal power, eventually settling in the city of Vorclaw in Koravia.

An evil old serpent, ever coiled to strike, Mithzrin is a master manipulator second only to Korvus. Korvus' rise to power did not go unnoticed by the elder vampire but the young king's sudden disappearance thereafter foreclosed any move on Mithzrin's part to squelch the upstart. Mithzrin believes Korvus dead and himself the ruler of Koravia. Styling himself the Black Bishop, Mithzrin foregoes noble titles, always wearing a clerical mitre and carrying a crozier. Mithzrin is allied with Baron Havelek and Count Vladrovic. The vampire Kaliyndarus is Mithzrin's chief rival for leadership of the Conclave and the person against whom Mithzrin devotes most of his plotting.

At the DM's option Mithzrin may be unusually susceptible to the clerics and trappings of either of his old faiths. The exact nature of these faiths is left to each DM but they should be obscure at best. Clerics of these faiths would turn or control Mithzrin as if clerics of two levels higher. Other clerics, merely employing trappings of these faiths, would turn as clerics one level higher.

Vorclaw under Mithzrin's misrule is quiet and prosperous, ominously so. By the Dark Lord's order, all churches and temples are closed everyday of the year except for the dark of the moon and days of a solar eclipse. At those times alone may prayers be offered up. Mithzrin leaves the day to day running of the city to the mayor and a council of selectmen, preferring to spend his time plotting. These officials are loath that anything draw their lords attention. Parties attempting to cause trouble will meet with little favor.

Kaliyndarus

Kaliyndarus is nearly as old as Mithzrin but in almost everyway his opposite. A dashing handsome figure, Kaliyndarus was a cavalier in life who violated his knightly vows of chastity in the most shocking manner. His rapine continued until he chose his last victim poorly. It was she that made him a vampire.

Still playing the gallant rogue after all these centuries, Kaliyndarus is a witty and charming companion. He sees his struggle with Mithzrin for control of the Conclave as something of a game, which infuriates Mithzrin no end.

The Viscountess Alacantara is his one sure ally in the Conclave. Unfortunately, Kaliyndarus' public image is not entirely reflective of his true nature. For all his charm, the vampire is given to terrible fits of rage and murderous anger. These fits are directly proportional to the amount time he maintains his jovial facade. He can contain his evil only so long before it explodes. Kaliyndarus is dangerously unstable. He has heard tales of Korvus but believes them purely mythical.

Because of the events surrounding his becoming undead, Kaliyndarus has a particular susceptibility to fair young women. He prefers them as victims over all others, courting them assiduously then destroying them in his inhumane fury. However, Kaliyndarus is utterly unable to hurt anyone who is virginal. The vampire is aware of his weakness and can sense those who can resist him. He spares no effort to destroy them or render them malleable to his power.

Vlacaw is the city ruled by Kaliyndarus. It is an open and wild town. Parties, festivals and celebrations are the rule of the day, everyday. The populace is desperately happy by Kaliyndarus' command. Parties entering the city will go unnoticed, lost in the chaos and merrymaking, unless they do something to draw the Dark Lord's attention.

Byorna

Byorna is the third most powerful vampire in Koravia and the most reclusive. She cares little for the Conclave and its business and takes as little part as she can. This is because, alone among the Dark Lords, she knows of Korvus and his fate. She has repeatedly tried to contact him but to no avail. Her every act is calculated to impress him and convince that she alone is his loyal servant. Korvus is aware of Byorna's actions and has considered contacting her directly but has not managed to overcome his paranoia. Should he contact her, he would have to decide whether to trust her or destroy her.

In life, Byorna was a druidess. Sworn to protect the woodlands, she actively opposed human expansion into the western mountains. Her efforts were so successful that she was marked for assassination by land hungry nobles. Byorna was successfully poisoned. A painful and slow acting poison, it would have been better had her death been more swift. Realizing what had happened, Byorna in a last, foolish act of defiance set her beloved forest ablaze, rather than let it fall to timbercutters. Before the flames had consumed her body Byorna became one of the thirsty dead, cursed by the forest spirits.

Unlike other vampires, Byorna does not drink blood but fresh spring water. She is deathly afraid of fire which always causes her maximum damage. If confronted with an open flame greater than a lamp or a single torch, she suffers the effects of a fear spell.

The city of Balalakan over which Byorna holds sway is a cold and dreary place. Byorna has decreed that no wood may be burned for heat, only peat which gives off less heat but less open fire as well. The smoke from thousands of peat fires hangs like a fog over the city. Trees have been declared sacred and a bloody form of

druidism the official faith. Outsiders are not welcomed by the insular people of this land except as sacrifices. Byorna has considered instituting the worship of Korvus as a deity but is unsure how he might react, flattered or angry that his existence and power are being acknowledged.

Vladimir Vladovic

Vladimir Vladovic is the Count of Drcklaw in death as he was in life. A bestial man, he enjoyed hunting serfs as game. Some say he was a cannibal who would wash down his grisly repast with his victims' blood. Some say these dark practices continue. Certainly, the hunts do. To no one's surprise, Vladimir rose from the dead as a vampire.

While a member Mithzrin's faction in the Conclave, Vladimir is an uncertain ally. Uncouth in the extreme, he is given to crude jests, fierce rages and black melancholy. Perhaps Vladimir sides with Mithzrin because of his hatred for Kaliyndarus, whom he regards as a fop and a snob. The fact that Vladimir is the butt of many of Kaliyndarus's jokes and scorn does nothing to help the situation.

An unintelligent man in life and unlife, Vladimir is the member of the Conclave most easily influenced by Korvus. Vladimir's rare moments of brilliance are the direct result of Korvus' intervention. The vampire is unaware of Korvus' influence and believes the ghost to be myth. Vladimir has no known peculiarities beyond those associated with all vampires.

Drcklaw is a terrible and forbidding place. The population is oppressed, ignorant and unwelcoming. Illogically, Vladimir is regarded with awe as a superhuman protector of the people. Vladimir encourages this kind of thinking and saves his worst rages for outsiders. Drcklaw is dangerously provincial and anti-foreigner riots are common. Adventurers may be hunted by an angry mob as deadly as the Darklord.

Alencya Alacantara

Lady Alacantara is the dark mistress of Larikala. A beautiful creature and accomplished diplomat, she is an enigma. Almost human in her tastes, she is well regarded by her subjects. Of her past almost nothing is known, but her dusky skin speaks of southern climes. Assiduously courted by all of the other members of the Conclave, Alencya usually votes with Kaliyndarus, voting with Mithzrin only often enough to appear independent. While she is unsure whether to believe what she has heard about Korvus, Alencya is wise enough to know that some force is at work in Koravia and to keep her options open.

Alencya likes a lively court and is a patron of the arts and commerce. Those unaware of her nature might not realize that they faced a Darklord. Mortal creatures seem to hold a special fascination for Alencya and she goes out of her way not to be cruel or harsh beyond the demands of the situation. As a result she has a formidable army of loyal followers who also serve as a valuable information gathering network. The populace does not realize that they are ruled by one of the undead.

It is rumored, and true, that Alencya enjoys relations with handsome courtiers not usually believed possible for the undead. These liaisons seem to be the Dark Lady's only weakness. Normally very circumspect and content to operate from the shadows, when certain mortals have caught her eye, she has gone out of her way to shower them with favors. These few have enjoyed Alencya's company but all have eventually vanished. This truth puts the lie to Alencya's almost beneficent image. She is a jealous mistress and will not tolerate a wandering eye in her chosen, real or imagined. All her favorites eventually run afoul of her jealous nature and are consumed by it.

Of all of Koravia's cities, Larikala appears to be the most pleasant. By day, the streets are clean and safe and everything appears normal. At night the illusion of safety vanishes. The darkness is filled with a tense uneasiness and the creatures of the night steal forth to seek their prey. No screams cut the chill night air. In the morning, no bodies or bloodstains are found. People just disappear and no one will speak of them or their fate, lest they be visited next.

Franz Joseph Havelek

"The Hammer" as he likes to be called is the Baron of Pozan. A strutting and swaggering bully, the Baron is a cruel coward. Made a vampire by Mithzrin because of his weak and disolute nature, Havelek lives in fear of his creator and takes every opportunity to take out his secret terror on his subjects, torturing them ceaselessly. The Baron always votes with Mithzrin but Mithzrin's puppet comes with a high price.

Addicted to human suffering, Havelek whiles away his time devising new tortures. So engaged and attended by sycophants, the administration of Pozan languishes. The cruel reign of the vampire and poor administration have allowed resistance groups to form against the Darklord's rule. The largest are the Sons of the Stake, committed to the Baron's destruction. In Pozan, there is a real chance to change things for the better.

Mithzrin and Korvus are not unaware of this danger. Mithzrin has sent what reinforcements he can to aid

his vassal but under Havelek's inept command they do little to help the embattled Baron. Korvus has had to take matters into his own hands. Much to his chagrin, he has been forced to directly intervene to keep the Darklord from being destroyed, risking exposure. Korvus has determined that if necessary he will let the Baron fall, trusting to his ability to find a more suitable Darklord. If such should prove necessary, Mithzrin's role in choosing Havelek in the first place will not be forgotten. The political makeup of Koravia may change radically.

Currently, Pozan is a dangerous place. The forces of darkness and light fight in the streets. The city is under siege by both sides and trust is impossible to come by. Survival is all most inhabitants can hope for. This is where Korvus is weakest and where the recapture of Koravia from darkness may begin.

Crysthellos

Coolly polished and polite, Crysthellos is the agent of the Conclave beyond Koravia's borders. It is part of Korvus' curse that as Koravia's borders expand, so does his power. Thus, Korvus seeks to expand his realm. The members of the Conclave, having found themselves unable to pass beyond Koravia's borders, share their secret master's obsession. Crysthellos is the chief agent of that obsession.

A vampire, Crysthellos' condition is the result of the combined efforts of the Conclave. He was created in a bloody ceremony to serve as their catspaw outside Koravia. Magically bound to the Conclave, Crysthellos is completely loyal to the letter of their orders, though not without his own ambitions. Should anything happen to the Conclave, Crysthellos would be free but he would never allow anything to happen, unless he could pick up the pieces. Because he operates outside Koravia, Crysthellos is beyond Korvus' immediate control which cause the Dark Lord no end of worries. Still, Korvus' realm has grown thanks to Crysthellos.

Operating in Geoff and Sterich, Crysthellos has begun to poison these lands. He raises undead hosts, commands packs of lycanthropes, incites humanoids and giants and gradually spreads the miasma that marks the tendrils of Korvus' realm reaching out to embrace more lands. Geoff and Sterich are under siege. Evil attracts evil and that evil grows beyond Crysthellos' control or knowledge. When the darkness is great enough, Korvus will be able to extend his reach deep into the Flaneass proper.

The Fanes of Light

Standing against Koravia is the little village of Hochoch, situated on the banks of the Real Stream in the forgotten land bounded by the Javan River, the Rushmoors, the Oytwood and the Dim Forest. A primitive and superstitious place, Hochoch has long endured the evils that surround it. The coming of Korvus is but one more.

The people of Hochoch hold to a any number of Patron Saints that they believe offer protection to those who venerate them. It seems the people of Hochoch have Patron Saints that protect against practically everything. The Fanes Of Light is the name Hochenfolk give to their beliefs. Each Patron Saint has his or her own Fane but when reference is made to The Fanes, it encompasses the widespread belief in Patron Saints, not any one.

The Fanes are not unaware of the darkening clouds over Geoff and Sterich and have begun to ride these lands, seeking to help. They know they will be next if Geoff and Sterich fall. Thus, is battle joined. Though the Fanes know not the full extent of the evil they confront, it knows them. Instinctively, it strikes back at Hochoch. In Geoff and Sterich, Crysthellos strikes against the Fanes, reporting back to the Conclave, which sends fell aid.

Koravia's Setup

As I have it set up, Koravia is a RL type setting. Geoff and Sterich are intermediate areas and Hochoch is a gothic area. This works very well as a contrast to the Keoland of my Greyhawk Renaissance Campaign and the Court of Love in Niolo Dra. While I don't use just this as the focal point of Keosh adventuring, it is available should I wish to run horror tinged games. I have found that it works well.

QSamantha

A PLAGUE YEARS CAMPAIGN: THE GODWALKERS

By Aria13, with additional by Iquander
Subj: GodWalkers 1
Date: 96-01-29 20:21:16 EST

In the WoG campaign which I run, the elves of Celene unleashed a terrible plague that devastated the Flaneass, post-FtA, resulting in massive depopulation. The result is a very frontier feeling Flaneass. I've discussed this before.

As a result of the depopulation, many gods have no worshippers any more or so few as not to matter. The lack of worship has led to huge decreases in the gods' powers and increasing desperation on the deities' part to obtain worshippers from the few humans remaining. Some deities have gone mad for want of worship.

Those deities driven mad by their decreased power have chosen to take radical steps to preserve themselves. These beings have vanished from the planes to take physical form on Oerth, where they seek new worshippers. They often become violent if not worshipped, if having gone insane has not made them violent to begin with. More than avatars but less than true deities, these are the GodWalkers.

GodWalkers were once divine and hope to be so again. In my campaign, there is no greater source of horror than a GodWalker. Desperate, insane and with a god's belief in their own supremacy, the GodWalkers are unchecked power personified. They acknowledge no law but themselves. Worship them or die. Though there are fewer than a dozen such beings on Oerth, their presence is still marked. All of the surviving powerbrokers of Greyhawk, as well as the gods which remain, must contend with the GodWalkers. Even the least among them is a being of terrible might. You can think of them as a cross between the Celtic Formori (Balor etc.) and the Dragon-Kings of the Dark Sun setting.

The threat of the GodWalkers has been met in the campaign by an uneasy alliance of the followers of good and evil, forced by the circumstances to put aside their differences and work together. This has resulted in the defeat or banishment of several of these malign beings. Unfortunately, insane doesn't mean stupid and several of the remaining GodWalkers have joined together for mutual protection.

Together they have raised the Isles of Woe from the unknown depths of the Nyr Dyv and made it their bastion. This has unleashed countless monstrosities upon the Flaneass, as well as terrible floods. While now confining themselves to the Isles of Woe for the most part, the GodWalkers are masters of an incredibly ancient and puissant land. Their already warped natures have only become more so in this ancient sink of depravity. Yet, the wonders of the ancient civilization that was the Isles of Woe is a beacon light in the howling wilderness that is now the Flaneass. It attracts many desperate for civilization at any price.

The elves of Celene would act to confront this growing menace but there is no trust between them and the remains of humanity. Thus, the power of the GodWalkers increases in the breach.

The elves need humanity, and vice versa, just as good and evil aligned humans have discovered a common cause that, however tenuously, transcends their enmity. Ultimately, I intend this to be the catalyst for a rapprochement between elves and humanity. For now, the GodWalkers are merely sources of fear, usually distant.

I know I've gotten flack before for having elves bring about a plague. However, I think that by standing stereotypes on their head I get a more involved game. Good and evil become fungible concepts which can lead to some intense roleplaying. IMO, alignments are a hinderance if clearly defined. Only when alignment is uncertain does it become a useful tool for roleplaying. The GodWalkers have catalyzed the process the elves began, making the disparate groups need each other.

I run these guys as mean as it gets.

Subj: The Walkin' Dudes

Date: 96-01-30 01:31:24 EST

From: Iquander

Aria,

Despite my objection to your statement about Sargent, I found your GodWalker posts really interesting. While plague-bearing elves are not likely to crop up in my campaign, I would love to be a player in such a world. Just think of all the righteous indignation spilled out at you some folders back, when this was first mentioned, and you'd be likely to hear a lot of that from any character I'd run.

I agree that turning stereotypes on their heads makes for great gaming (perhaps especially from players

more canonical than myself--if such players exist):

Aria: You discover that the culprit of the plague is not the vile Incabulos, as you had suspected, but the court of Yolande herself!

Iquander: No way! Her strict policy of noninvolvement in the affairs of humans means that she would be highly unlikely to unleash this horror upon the Flanaess. Even with the oftentimes harsh Parseval whispering poisoned advice in her ear, the redoubtable mage Onselven would have dissuaded her from taking such drastic action. To upset the balance such would be to sweep thousands of chess pieces from the board simultaneous, thus disrupting cosmic order. Perhaps the Knights of Luna would----

Aria: You start to cough.

Anyway, you get the picture. I think it's great stuff. I'm wondering about the GodWalkers, though. Are these "actual" Greyhawk gods, meaning beings mentioned in connection to the setting, or are they personages of your own creation? If they're figures we're familiar with, I'd love to hear your reasoning as to why their flock left (aside from being killed by the virus, of course) and what drove them to insanity. I'm particularly interested in odd combinations here. . . would this insanity cross alignment lines? Given your attitudes about rigidly defined alignments, I suppose it would, and again I think this makes for excellent game play.

Assuming these events happened "in campaign," rather than as backstory, I imagine that it would really be cool to have had a PC specialty priest of one of the gods who would become a GodWalker. First, I imagine the priest would have to contend with losing his flock, then with questioning his own faith. Finally, I suppose the PC would have to decide to throw in his lot with the weakened god, or join those fighting against him.

All in all, I'm fascinated by the idea, and it would be really interesting if you could give us more information, particularly if some of the powers of Greyhawk are involved.

Iquander

PS: It seems likely that the Quasi-Deities would all of a sudden become useful in this instance. Given that most of them do not, in fact, have worshippers and would thus be largely free from this new madness, they seem the most fit to oppose them. I know you don't like FtA, but one of my favorite things in there is the "deal" the powers have as far as non-involvement in the mortal sphere. If this remains in effect (and I assume it would, if you use it), it seems Heward and company would be ripe for action. Perhaps the Quasi-Deity Krovis would have something to say about this reborn empire, especially considering the legends that place him at its initial downfall.

Subj: Re:GodWalkers 1

Date: 96-02-03 21:12:38 EST

From: Aria13

Iquander,

I'm a firm believer that a deity is only little better than its worshippers. Thus, most GodWalkers went mad purely through lack of worship occasioned by the death of their worshippers. When the worshippers died, clerics stopped performing rites and no prayers of the faithful were forthcoming, the gods in questioned panicked and some gradually went from panic to ravening fear to madness.

Most of this action was backstory, given that we're talking a dozen deities at least. However, the PCs were present in Radigast City during one deity's apotheosis as a GodWalker. Horror? Scary? You bet!

If you've ever read Michael Moorcock's second Corum Trilogy, Oak & The Ram, Sword & the Stallion, Bull & the Spear, you've got a pretty good idea what a GodWalker appears like.

All of the GWs were minor deities. The majors were major for a reason - they had sufficient support to survive. Of the majors Heironeous is the one in the worst shape but still hanging on.

Delleb, LG God of Reason and Intellect is the leader of the GodWalkers on the Isles of Woe. He appeared in Radigast City.

Zodal, NG God of Mercy, Hope and Benevolence is Delleb's number two.

Velnius, N God of Sky and Weather/Beltar CE Goddess of Malice, pits and Deep Caves/Bralm N Goddess of Insects and Industriousness/ Kurell CN God of Jealousy, Revenge and Thievery and Lirr CG Goddess of Prose, Poetry and Art are all working with Delleb.

Llerg CN God of Beasts and Strength is the single most powerful GodWalker unaligned with Delleb.

The deities Atroa (Spring), Sotillion (Summer), Telchur (Winter) and Wenta (Autumn) are all loosely allied

GodWalkers who appear to be undergoing some sort of transformation even beyond that from god to GodWalker. (You don't want to know;-)

Those are the known GodWalkers, though there may be others. With Delleb now headquartered on the Isles of Woe with his group and the seasonal deities appearing sporadically as they undergo a metamorphosis, that only leaves Llerg as a wide ranging threat.

The PCs played before, through Delleb's appearance and after and are quite pleased that matters have stabilized in this respect. We refer to the period from initial appearance of Delleb to the rising of the Isle of Woe as the Time of the GodWalkers - when they roamed the Flaneass causing major trouble. Now, they're plotting. The PCs have had several brushes with GodWalkers in the campaign and will probably have more.

The remaining deities will not move against the GodWalkers directly. Part of the reason is an agreement not to interfere but the greater reason is fear. GodWalkers in their madness and absolute presence on Oerth are more than a match for any god's avatar. A god's avatar could be killed or worse. There is a fear that if confronted by a true deity, a GW might be able to steal some of that god's power. This fear is especially connected with the seasonal GWs. The combination of these fears keeps the gods at bay. Cleric PCs spend a good deal of time trying to puzzle out just what is or is not true in the situation. Can Beory act safely? Until she's sure, she won't take any major risks. Which may well play into the GWs hands. (Bwa ha ha ha ha!).

The Quasi-deities are indeed more active. They play roles exactly like that of Gandalf and the other Istari. They won't get involved very much beyond giving support, information and rallying the troops. They don't want to get creamed either.

The fun comes in when all the variously aligned humans and their leaders like Mord, Iuz etc. plus the Quasi's, plus the elves have to work together to get something done. Talk about chewing up the scenery! I love this stuff!

Arial3:)

PRISONERS OF ZAGIG

(Or, "The Ultimate, Definitive Listing of Iuz's Fellow Prisoners")

By Iquander

Subj: Re:Old Issue: Iuz imprisoned

Date: 96-02-02 16:49:12 EST

The Ultimate, Definitive Listing of Iuz's Fellow Prisoners

Along with, "how did Iuz help with the Temple of Elemental Evil when he was imprisoned?" and "when did the short war happen?" this question should be bronzed and inducted to the Greyhawk Hall of Fame.

The exact same topic has come up recently on Usenet, and it has been discussed here no fewer than three times already. In short, "officially," the only other prisoner with Iuz in Castle Greyhawk was Wastri. This information comes from "Bathtime for the Hopping Prophet," an adventure card from the City of Greyhawk boxed set.

Given the fact that there were nine prisoners, and that nearly everything Gygax has ever written has included, in some way the number nine, it's safe to say that there is a pattern here. The basis of this pattern, of course, are the nine celestial alignments. These alignments played a huge role in Gygax's game, and unless I'm mistaken, there's evidence to prove that everyday people perceived alignment as "fact." Anyone else remember "alignment languages"?

So, it would seem to make sense that Zagig Yragrene, in order to steal a portion of the Obelisk's power, needed to capture nine demigods; one of each alignment. This raises a very real concern. Not counting Mayahaine (because she wasn't on Oerth yet) or Gaknulak (because his ties to Oerth are tenuous, and he rarely visits), Oerth has but two other demigods. If we assume Rudd and Zuoken were brought along for the ride, we're still five demigods short.

Or are we? I combed through all of the Greyhawk material I could, searching for "forgotten gods." I found quite a few, such as Dalt, Om and Landron, but none of these seemed to be of the "demi" extraction. A few others, however, did. Against the Cult of the Reptile God introduced us to Merikka, the goddess of agriculture (most likely of Oeridian heritage). Likewise, the Forgotten Shrine of Tamoachan introduced us to almost a dozen divine beings once worshipped by the now dormant Olman empire. Of these, Tlazoteotl and Chitza-Atlan make excellent candidates. Xilonen, the Hairy Mother Goddess of Corn is a slightly less successful match, though I have chosen to retain her as one of Zagig's captives. Finally, one of the pregenerated characters from that module worshipped Stern Alia, patron of Pontylver and most assuredly an Oeridian demigoddess. In fact, I've incorporated her into Oeridian myth as a sort of Virgin-Mary figure, a once-mortal imbued with the seed that begat Hextor and Heironeous (just _who's_ seed it was, I have yet to determine. . .).

So, broken down by alignment, let's take a look at the contenders (it should be noted that I've played fast and loose with some of these alignments, as they were not given in the original material).

AL	Name	Sphere	WaL*	Sex
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LG:	Merikka	Agriculture	Any Good	F
LN:	Stern Alia	Law, Truth	LN	F
LE:	Wastri	Amphibians, Bigotry	LN, LE	M [1]
NG:	Xilonen	Corn	Any	F [2]
TN:	Zuoken	Phys. and Mental Mastery	N, LN	M [3]
NE:	Chitza-Atlan	Underworld (Mictlan)	Any	M
CG:	Tlazoteotl	Mother of the Earth	Any	F [4]
CN:	Rudd	Chance, Skill	CN, CG, N	F
CE:	Iuz	Deceit, Pain	Any Evil, CN	M

Notes: * Worshippers Alignment

[1] This assumes Wastri's LE "tendencies" were enough to satisfy the conditions of the casting.

[2] Psyclops mentioned some good reservations about this being's placement on the list last time around, and I don't have much in the way of support for it at the moment. Offhand, I'd say that the Xilonen of Tamoachan was merely an avatar of the thing cut off from the god itself either with the decline in worshippers or the capture of the true deity by Zagig Yragrene. At any rate, another "official" placement in this slot would be much appreciated.

[3] Another concern last time around is why Zagig, a neutral fellow, would capture a neutral god. My guess is that the formula warranted it, and Zagig wanted divinity so badly that matters of personal ethos were of little concern at the time. In my campaign, Zuoken is still down there. When his followers discover the location of their patron, it is likely some real religious fervor will break out between followers of the servant of the Uncaring One and the servant of the Lady of Perfection.

[4] Tlazoteotl, the Mother Goddess of the Earth, was probably at one time a lesser goddess. With the fall of the Olman Empire, however, worship of this being waned, and she became of demigod status. She did not take the failure of her people well, and the great ameoboid workbeasts she once bequeathed to the people of Tamoachan de-evolved into hideous creatures called "gibbering mouters" by Sea Princes explorers.

Iquander

PANTHEONS OF THE FLANAESS

SCARLET GODS

By Lefto and Iquander

Subj: Scarlet Gods (1)

Date: 96-02-05 21:03:20 EST

On the subject on the Scarlet Brotherhood and its Powers, I offer the following, and ask that those of greater learning (and certainly there are many) forgive this humble author.

Sages of many lands speak with some authority of the gods of the Suel people, among them being Pyremius, Lord of Fire, the Eternal Assassin, and Syrul, Lady of Lies, Goddess of Deceit. These two are Evil, to be sure, though neither furthers the causes of Chaos or Order. Rumors place the Scarlet Brotherhood in service to these Powers, and 'tis certain this group seems a mortal (we hope!) extension of Syrul's and Pyremius' power.

The assassination of the Sea Princes are perhaps the most obvious example of the Scarlet Sign's tactics. Traitors in our midst, as they say. It is difficult to say how complete their insinuation into the good nations of the Flanaess (and evil ones?) is, but it is clear that Sryul at least favors the Brotherhood with her forked tongue.

However, far more terrifying are the whispers which speak of the worship of the Dark One, whose name I shall not repeat even here. And indeed, one might see His influence in the Brotherhood as well. Fatigue, illusion, paralysis, weakness are all his domain. The so-called Father of Obedience has indeed instilled such into the good people of the land.

Since no sure answers are forthcoming from the south, it is left for us sages to debate the possibilities. Legends say that the Dark One was once nearly all-powerful, and because of his power he felt that all others should follow him. How he convinced them to follow was not important, nor was their welfare. All was there for his benefit. The other gods found this to their liking not at all, and so opposed him. In a great battle was He Whom I Will Not Name trapped, but even the gods combined might could not destroy Him. And so he sleeps still, locked in his Eternal Slumber. But wisps of his might are still caught by those who stand in the stormy winds.

From what we know of celestial matters (and I grant you it is precious little), these wisps would not be enough to empower the Brotherhood to do what it seems they have. So did they turn to Syrus and Pyremius when the Dark One failed them? Unlikely, for the Suel were worshipping Syrus and Pyremius for ages. If we can assume that the Dark Ones fall occurred long before the rise of the Suel Empire, then the Suel who became the founders of the Brotherhood would have forsaken Him too far in the past for rumors to still circulate about their connection.

More likely, I think, would be that Syrus and Pyremius wish the Dark One freed, and so have given assistance to the Scarlet Brotherhood in their vile quest. These three Powers all have closely linked spheres of influence. All seek Evil for its own sake, not caring how the world is ordered as long as all bow to their whim. How they would be able to rule together, if such was their goal, I know not. I don't care to find out.

One of the great unknowns in this debate is what type of Power this Dark One is. We know that the Scarlet Brotherhood, at least superficially, seeks the complete subjugation of all non-Suel peoples. If they are such racists, then it is unlikely they would worship a non-Suel power. On this point, the argument for Syrul and Pyremius is strengthened. On the other hand, what we know of the Dark One is very similar to what we know of the history of the Suel Empire.

Another unknown is, if the Three are working together, how? I would hazard that the priests of the Dark One are in control, with priests of Syrul and Pyremius on the next tier. I believe this because there are far more children's tales about the Dark One than any other nightmarish power. Such folk tales do not descend to a child's ears if, in some forgotten place in their parents' hearts, there is not some grain of truth. The strength to unite the divided factions of evil, and with that power to wrap Oerth in an eternity of villainy, murder, and decay.

I of course assume throughout that the whispers one hears about the Scarlet Sign are true, and I believe they may well be for what is a lie but a cloaked truth or the mirror image of the truth. The difficulty lies in discovering which the lie is.

May the shadow run from the Light,
Califor
Sage of Verbobonc

In the FtA description of Tharizdun (a lesser god), it states that his priests cannot employ spells of 3rd or

greater power. Thus, the Scarlet Brotherhood could not have scored the successes it has during the Wars worshipping only Tharizdun. Then again, it might explain their strategy - avoiding any real direct conflict. It would also explain their intense interest in acquiring evil artifacts and other magic items, in order to supplement their power.

In my campaign, I considered Tharizdun a greater god - perhaps the greatest god. When he was imprisoned, he lost most of his power. However, enough was left for him to continue to control his supernatural minions (those that still elected to serve him). Through these he grants spells as would a lesser god. Priests powerful enough to require his direct assistance are so few that he is able to grant them some high level spells, with certain restrictions. For example, they cannot create magic items. Certain spells are prohibited as well.

Lefto

Subj: Re:Scarlet Gods (2)

Date: 96-02-05 22:49:51 EST

From: Iquander

Lefto said,

>>>>

Thus, the Scarlet Brotherhood could not have scored the successes it has during the Wars worshipping only Tharizdun.

>>>>

Why not? The Scarlet Brotherhood, even without priest and wizardly magic, is probably the best-trained nation of the flanaess as far as manipulation and assassination. I find it wholly possible that much of their gains could be made without the casting of a single spell.

The troublesome references to Syrul and Pyremius exist, though, so if we want to stick to what's written (which I'm not positive I do), we need to find some way to compromise. I suggest this.

A careful examination of the available material on the SB seems to suggest that the society of the Tilvanot exists on two tiers. The most elaborated upon, of course, are the fighting monks of the Scarlet Brotherhood. These individuals, I believe, worship Tharizdun and Tharizdun alone.

There exists several residents of the plateau who are not members of the brotherhood, however, and it seems likely that these individuals would worship the aforementioned Suel gods. That the Dark One is the ultimate patron of the monastic society is something of an open secret with the non-brotherhood Suel, and for some reason, the monks tolerate the worship of Syrul and Pyremius, and these gods alone.

As for rationalizing the gains of the SB during the wars, I suggest that good ol' fashioned willpower and general bad-guyedness can go a long way. If you need more, might I suggest some form of malefic influence? Gygax certainly hinted as much in his books, and this might be the connection we've been looking for so fervently.

Wasting more money on this infernal machine,
Iquander

THE GOOD OERTH

THE CONTINENT OF HEPMONALAND

(Or, Hepmonaland is mine, all mine!!!)

By TSR Roger

Subj: Hepmonaland

Date: 96-02-27 13:50:47 EST

In the eventually-to-be-released Oerth Journal #3, I wrote up some statistics on the world of Oerth and its continents & seas, based on published material. One of the points I made was that Hepmonaland was almost certainly a continent, based on the huge size of the visible fragment in the little Oerik map.

Since then, I've come to regard Hepmonaland as the original homeland of the Olman people, and it appears also to be the home of black humans who (I think) won their war against the old Olman Empire in Hepmonaland. Thus, the continent would be an excellent place to locate both Central American (what's left of them) and African countries and kingdoms. I figure much of the continent is tropical or subtropical, with all the usual monsters that the Monstrous Compendium appendices, Monster Manuals, etc. have pegged for such regions. You can have player-character wemics, beastmen, etc., and use all of the African-campaign articles that DRAGON Magazine has been running for the past few years.

However, the point was made in the last GREYHAWK meeting that these essentially black African countries should not be regarded as primitive or barbaric. I would strongly prefer setting up multiple kingdoms and states, competing with one another as the states do in the Flanaess, and setting them at the same level of advancement as the Flanaess: ironworking technology, 9th-level spells, canal and highway systems, sprawling cities and seaports, ugly underground races (the derro would be perfect, if you catch my drift), new demihuman races, and all that.

Why hasn't the Flanaess gotten in closer touch with the Hepmonaland cultures? I doubt racism is worth bringing up, except as it applies to some of the Suel. Basically, there are too many sea monsters, dragons, evil wizards, uninhabited regions, etc. between the two areas. Travel across Oerth cannot possibly be regarded as in the same league as travel across Earth in the 15th or 16th century, since Columbus didn't have to worry about real leviathans eating his fleet. So, separate regions of Oerth develop but have little contact with each other. No doubt this is why we haven't heard much from the Asian/Oriental regions of Oerik--look at all the mountain ranges, deserts, the Sea of Dust, etc. between those regions.

I'd like to see more discussion here about creating Hepmonaland cultures for those DMs who wish to use them. BUT, if a DM doesn't want the campaign to leave the Flanaess, how can foreign cultures be brought into game play anyway? A shipwreck could deposit a group of African-style wizards and warriors on the shores of the Great Kingdom, and PCs who happen to be in the area on a secret mission could give them assistance in staying alive (which is what everyone in the GK does these days, I hear). An African wizard could teleport to the City of Greyhawk, in disguise, and seek advice on dealing with a rogue monster or artifact back home. It wouldn't take much to sort this out. Waiting for some chat on developing this continent....Roger

End Best of Greyhawk #10