

# THE OERTH 3 JOURNAL

Produced by the Council of Greyhawk  
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The Council of Greyhawk is an informal organization of gamers dedicated to keeping the World of Greyhawk a viable campaign world. At present, this group meets and communicates primarily on America Online. Send inquiries to [Iquander@aol.com](mailto:Iquander@aol.com).

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

A common criticism leveled against the World of Greyhawk campaign setting is that, in the nearly 20 years in which it enjoyed full product support, all of its possibilities of expansion have been explored. Balderdash. This issue of the Oerth Journal yet again explodes that myth. As long as there are talented and creative Dungeon Masters creating new material for their own campaigns, the chance of expending Oerth's possibilities is nil.

In this issue, the Oerth Journal begins a new column, called "The Good Oerth: Exploring Beyond the Flanaess", to prove this point. The portion of the world that we know so well is such a small fraction of the planet itself, that even, heaven forbid, should the Flanaess run out of opportunity, there is still the land beyond the horizon.

Oh, and did I mention that that isn't ever going to happen? The other three articles included in this issue prove that the familiar lands from the Dramidj to the Solnor still hold plenty of mystery for us to explore and create. I'm confident that this is the best issue of the Oerth Journal yet.

Having said that, it would be easy to despair about the state of future issues. Will we be able to match this quality on a regular basis? The answer is an unequivocal and resounding yes. Already, we have accumulated enough material to release the next three issues of the Journal in the time it took to assemble this one. And all of it is of the highest quality.

I should mention, because of the organization of the Council of Greyhawk and the eagerness of all members to see new issues of the Journal come out as frequently as possible, the Oerth Journal is now officially a quarterly, and we will publish at least four quality issues every single year. And that's just the minimum. Material permitting, you can expect to see new issues of the Journal as fast as we can crank them out.

There is, however, one negative side to all of recent progress. Because the Council has expanded outside of America Online, with issues of the Journal available on MPGN and Genie, it has become impossible to give a definitive listing of members of the Council of Greyhawk in each issue of the Oerth Journal.

There are literally hundreds of gamers who have expressed interest in Council affairs and the attendance at regular meetings has never been higher. For this reason, only those members of the Council who have contributed to the previous three issues of the Oerth Journal or the Player's Guide to the World of Greyhawk Campaign will be listed in

each issue. It's an unfortunate development, but one mandated by the ever-growing nature of the Council of Greyhawk.

Want to be recognized in the Oerth Journal as a member? Submitting articles, offering to lend help in editing, and offering help in various other areas will all get your name in the issue.

It's an exciting time for the Council of Greyhawk, and the Oerth Journal will just keep on getting better.

That's a promise.

Until the starbreak,

*Savant Squander*

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# SORCEROUS SOCIETIES OF THE FLANAESS

by Gary Holian (P Smedger@aol.com, glholian@mit.edu)

In the past, I have brought you the most puissant writings of the Savant-Sage (known to have lived in the City of Greyhawk during the Epoch of Magic), including portions of his highly regarded: 'Catalogue of the Land Flanaess'. Now, I have uncovered the correspondences of a little known historian calling himself simply: The Shadow-Sage, who appears to have lived somewhere in the Flanaess at roughly the same time as the legendary Savant-Sage. The true identity of this individual remains unrevealed, however, as is his (or her) place of origin. These writings suggest, nonetheless, that he (or she) was privy to many of the histories, goings on, and even secret events of the time. Here I include one of the less cryptic writings, the rest to be revealed as I am able to fathom and then part with them.

-Pluffet Smedger, the Elder, s.o.h.]

Welcome Gentlereader,

It is I once again, your enigmatic 'Shadow-Sage' (is that really what they are calling me?), writing to you on another matter of some genuine interest. Indeed, not too long ago, I received a short missive inquiring into the nature of magical collegiality in the Flanaess. While I found the letter's arrival more curious than the nature of its question (since it floated through the window of my study on gossamer wings and landed upon my desk in the middle of my morning repast), I thought that sending a copy of the ensuing response to yourselves was entirely in order, since I am as often asked for my broad surveys as my infamous secret histories. So, setting down a quick answer (on the winged blank pages that accompanied the missive and that later flew out my window, their task complete), I proceeded to jot down both the current fact and rumors surrounding the well-known (and even the more mysterious) societies of the Art in the Flanaess. From my quill to your eyes friends, do with this as you wish.

Regards,  
The 'Shadow-Sage'

The Magical Organizations of the Flanaess arranged

according to importance and with my humble comments:

## MAJOR:

(Indicates widespread regional or international influence)

### The Guild of Wizardry of Greyhawk:

Still the largest and broadest guild of mages in the whole of the Flanaess. It is also one of the least political, secretive, or closed guilds in existence. In fact, by most accounts almost any proven practitioner of magic is welcome, whether he or she is a mage, illusionist, bard, or an even more exotic spellcaster. It has no political agenda save perhaps its own continued existence and aggrandizement. In an unusual turn, the Guild does not require the exclusive allegiance of its membership. This means that many mages from all over the Flanaess claim affiliation; in fact, it has become a source of local prestige in many areas to be a member of the famous Guild of Wizardry of Greyhawk. Its official rolls over the last decade number nearly a thousand active mages, though perhaps half that many are in the city at any one time and a majority of those are dilettantes or virtually inactive.

Founded as a free haven for all mages in the late 4th century CY by the legendary Mad Archmage, Zagig Yragerne, the Guild of Wizardry has the most expansive collection of known magic and of arcane texts in the Flanaess (it has long been one of the fastest growing guilds in Oerik). The large structure surrounding this enviable collection and the guild is in the Free City's Garden Quarter. It is an architectural wonder, thought to be impregnable and of magical design. Within its vaults (which have been continuously stocked over the last two centuries) are the magical fortunes of numerous archmages, including, it is believed, those of the legendary Mad Archmage, himself.

The Guild of Wizardry still draws adherents from all parts of the Flanaess, virtually untouched as it was by the history of the recent war. In fact, it has become a kind of haven for many an exiled mage from beleaguered foreign lands. The Guild has long since taken over the stewardship of the College of Magic (once within the purview of the more austere Society of Magi (mentioned below) and it is now run in cooperation with the guild itself. Interestingly, it is one of a very few wizard's guilds to widely support the so-called "Wild" or "Chaos Magic" that has resurged in popularity within the last two decades (teaching the same, in cooperation with the College of Magic), reaching heights not achieved since the time of the Mad Archmage, himself.

Infamous members of the Guild include the archmages thought to comprise the mysterious Circle of Eight, and such luminaries as Kieren Jalucian and the

enigmatic Blue Wizard, Philidor. There are, of course, many others who are not so relatively well-known, but act behind the veil of dispassionate association. Currently, the Guild of Wizardry's reputation suffers from a small handful of nasty blemishes, not the least of which was the apparent spectacular and complete destruction of two of its most luminous members and the traitorship of a third before the Great Signing last year.

### **The Sagacious Society of Nyronnd:**

Based in Rel Mord, but widely represented in all Nyronndese Cities, this arcane society is even older than the Guild of Wizardry and the Society of Magi in the Free City of Greyhawk. Though not the only Nyronndal guild in existence, the Sagacious Society is certainly the most influential and consequential, and is expected to remain so for many years to come. This long-lived gathering of mages is unusual, in so far as it contains a large majority of non-practitioners with a voice equal to that of the member mages. Therefore, it is often considered as much a philosophical and debating society as a true sorcerous guild, for it includes sages, learned-folk, priests (particularly of Boccob and Rao), and even the Olve.

The magic-using branch, however, is viewed as a distinct element within the Sagacious Society (particularly when viewed from within) and it is referred to as "Boccob's Rostrum". This diffuse, though potent group is comprised of a powerful block of medium to highly skilled mages, the most celebrated of which are thought to be the puissant Royal Archmage, Ghiselinn (almost certainly) and The Grey Seer (uncertain, but possible). Most of the War Wizards of Nyronnd are also thought to be members, even if their support fluctuates between the tacit and dangerously zealous. The Society is quite proud of the Royal Magical College [attached to the prestigious Royal University at Rel Mord] which still turns out some of the best generalist mages in the Flanaess. Though the Royal College lacks the sheer artistry and exuberance of the Pyramid Arcane in Greyhawk (being housed in buildings little different than those of the regular Royal University), it is still thought to harbor many treasures and secrets as well.

The Society has recently lost many valiant sorcerers to the Great War and even some to cowardice, who have since fled to smaller guilds in the Urnst States (Radigast City or Leukish/Seltaren) or even farther afield to escape the menace to the east. This, of course, has been a great blow to the strength of their efforts. The Sagacious Society is in the midst of a laborious process of recouping from these losses, and they are known to be scouring the Flanaess for lost items of magical power, particularly some noted items of pre-imperial Oeridian manufacture. The current focus of the Sagacious Society is its total opposition towards the

fractured Aerdy behemoth to the east and the restoration and preservation of the Nyronndese heritage and culture. Time will only tell if they can be successful, but as always, we watch and wait.

### **The Sorcerer's Nexus of Rel Astra:**

The name actually refers to the infamous guildhall, rather than the organization itself, which is officially called: "The Aeridian Coadjutancy for the Independent Practitioners of Magecraft and the Mystical Arts". The guild is housed in a series of interconnecting towers, eerily hanging structures, and angular buildings of strange and unique architectural design in the central quarter of the old city. The Nexus (as it is often referred to both inside and outside the guild) has been an evolving part of the city since the Astran metropolis was founded less than a millennium ago. Legends have it, that the structure was initiated with the leaning tower of a single magus, rumored to have been Suel (perhaps even an exile). So it remained for a very long time, until necessity required expansion. Century after century of new and sometimes wildly bold additions have created what we know today to be the single most odd and interesting place in the city. Surprisingly, despite a dozen varying styles of architecture, and even what seems like impossible construction (no doubt magical in origin), this slowly growing anastomose is still a wonder to behold.

From its founding, the Nexus has ever been a gathering place of free and gifted mages (the Art always having been a carefully controlled commodity in Aerdi society) whether because they have been of ignoble birth, or without a secured position in a Celestial House, or among those few blue-blooded rogues who were no longer welcome in their own houses. The Nexus is by historical standards an untraditional magical guild, having routinely offered such services as accommodation, magical resupply and training, and even employment to any and all comers, before such things became fashionable in guilds from Astra to Mitrik.

Stewardship has traditionally fallen to tenured elder mages and even some fortuitous benefactors (of which the House of Drax was one.) However, control of the organization has recently been assumed (within the last two decades) by a group of mysterious and powerful mages calling themselves the "Dweomermasters". Who they are and their exact purposes remain almost entirely unknown, both inside and outside the guild. It is suspected that they are a cabal of noble mages (including even a Prince of the realm), who have come together from all over the Great Kingdom, somehow sensing the fall which was to come. This, however, remains unconfirmed. The name of the legendary mage, Daern, has also been linked to them, but as yet such rumors remain unproved as well.

What is known, however, is that in this same span of time, the Sorcerer's Nexus of Rel Astra has become the greatest haven for the independent mages of the former Great Kingdom and of the entire Solnor coast who seek to escape the madness of Grand Prince Ivid and his animus lords. Scores of exiled and hunted mages from all over Aerdy have swollen its ranks. Indeed, the Sorcerer's Nexus is fast approaching the size of the Guild of Wizardry in the City of Greyhawk and it is the greatest threat to the latter's influence as the most preeminent center of magic in the Flanaess. Ironically, it may have been the combined power of the membership of the Nexus that convinced the Overking not to lay siege to the great city of Rel Astra during the war and his imperial majesty's policies since then have only increased the Nexus' power and influence. For that, the Nexus has received the near total deference of Lord Drax and the general support of the populace. This, despite the unseen tendrils that seem to be weaving themselves throughout all of Astran society of late. This situation bears close watching ... attention that it no doubt receives.

### **The Zashassar of Ekbir:**

This wondrous place in the City of Ekbir is perhaps the oldest continuously surviving magical society in the whole of the Flanaess. Sitting across from the Caliph's glorious palatial abode in the Grand Plaza of the aforementioned great port city of the Dramidj is one of the most unique places in all of Oerik. Couched in mists and constructed entirely of a pristine white marble that appears to soar far into the sky, the Zashassar is both a school and an enclave for the last great magic of the Ancient Bakluni people. It is believed to have been founded before the Invoked Devastation itself, more than a millennium ago, as a haven for Baklunish mages escaping the terrible war with their nemeses, the Suel (though many legends hold that none of the Elder Ones escaped their last stand against the Suel at Tovag Baragu and that their secrets therefore died with them).

The enclave has thus far remained intact, and as the City of Ekbir grew from but a distant outpost of the Baklunish Empire to the new center of its surviving people's culture and politics, so has the Zashassar grown. Today, it is regarded as the most puissant school of elemental magic in all of Oerik, if not all of Oerth. Amongst its members are some of the most powerful Pyromancers, Aeromancers, Geomancers, and Hydromancers extant in the Flanaess in over a thousand years. Its school of traditional sorcery, accounting for the other magical disciplines, is also nearly peerless. Even the Art of the Sha'ir flourishes within this edifice, much to the chagrin of the priests of Al-Zarad (Boccob), who claim that its practice is not true magic.

Legendary graduates of the Zashassar include such

famous individuals as the brothers Al-Sammal: Rary and Arkalan of Ket (the latter, now resident in the Free City of Greyhawk) and the arch-pyromancer, Karzalin of the court of Belvor IV. In centuries past, the infamous black necromancer, Iggwilv also emerged from the Zashassar, a mistress of the Rites. Even the infamous Kermin, the Mindbender, now in service to the Darklord of Dorakaa, is also believed to have attended the place at one time.

The Zashassari (as its members are called) are assumed to be divided into various internal societies, who are of strong influence throughout all of the Lands of Bakluni, save perhaps in the City of Zeif, where there is some distrust between those of the Zashassar and the more independent local sorcerers. It is difficult in the East to ascertain such things as the manner of their governance or details of their hierarchy, since few if any in the East have ever joined the enclave and left to tell of it (known associates have not been forthcoming). It is known that the society is deferential towards the ruling Caliph (thought to be a direct descendant of the four legendary Padishah-Kings of old), but wary of outsiders, particularly foreign mages. The Baklunish public is not privy to their interests or their collective goals, either.

The events of the recent wars have seemingly passed by this group without incident. Ultimately, it is unsure whether or not they still preserve some vestige of the great magic that felled the Suel Imperium so very long ago, but it is doubted.

### **INTERMEDIATE:**

(The influences of the following societies are limited to a city, nation, or small region.)

#### **The United Artificers of Irongate:**

A strongly political (at least at the top) and influential rising star on the magical horizon. The magical guild of Irongate was once a small, but thriving guild until the last century, which saw the quick formation and forging of the ill-fated Iron League. Unfortunately, though the United Artificers and the other leaders of the Free City of Irongate were able to help protect their own lands from the Scarlet Ones' treachery, they were too late to assist their brethren in Idee, Onnwal, and the Lordship Isles before the unseen darkness swept them away from power.

Now, following the Great Wars, the Irongaters' resolve has been forged anew and this combative spirit (and perhaps siege mentality) extends to Irongate's mages as well. Their numbers have grown disproportionately and they now include a large group of refugees from the former Iron

League in residence, including a significant, though small handful of four archmages from Idee and Onwall (who each had the sorcerous might to make good their escape). Cobb Darg, the putative ruler of Irongate, relies upon the U.A. (as it is often called for simplicity) for needed intelligence and the guild closely and wisely advises the city's Lord Mayor in all matters both arcane and even mundane.

The wizard's school supported by the U.A. is probably the most highly regarded in the region, particularly the school of Invocation. Many a raiding party has met instant death at the hands of the Guardians on the city's gates. The guild's current focus is divided between the South Province and its Witch-King, Reydrich, and the Scarlet Brotherhood. It has so far managed to check the advances of both, but the undeclared assault grows with every day, causing the shrewd mages to become both desperate and ingenious in their defense of the city.

Many rumors abound that the senior mages are now engaged in the construction of an extra-dimensional Matrix of intraplanar gates beneath the burgeoning metropolis at great cost. One such gate has already been supposedly completed, linking the Free City with the Velunian capital, Mitrik. This is believed to have occurred with the assistance of the mage, Bigby (formerly of Scant), and the mages are well on their way to opening a second link in either Verbobonc (perhaps with the help of the Silver Consortium), Dyvers, or even the Free City of Greyhawk. Part of the relatively vast Undercity that is being meticulously carved from the earth by the dwarves of Irongate is said to house these gates. To what end this will all come, no one is quite sure.

### **The Society of Magi of Greyhawk:**

Influence generally limited to the Free City; it is often mistakenly thought of as part of the Guild of Wizardry, though it is in fact a far older and more insular group. The Society is an entity to itself, founded four hundred or more years ago by a small traveling group of exiled mages from the Great Kingdom (many claim from Dyvers, though in those days, one was the other.) When the Free City of Greyhawk was but a trading post on the great eastward migratory trail and long before the renaissance that brought the city to prominence during the 4th century C.Y., the Society found itself along the Selintan (one of its members, a personage called simply, "The Grey Savant", founded the Grey College in this time.) Its primary concern has always been the power and visibility of the Free City and its mages, even when the place was simply a backwater. In that respect, they were among the first to see the value and potential of the place that would later become the "Gem of the Flanaess". Its members were instrumental in the founding of the College of Magic and the Guild of Wizardry itself, in which the

majority of the Society are also members.

The Society of Magi have always been a relatively democratic group. They elect a president for a two year term, which by the new city charter of CY 498, has a seat on the Directing Oligarchy. Currently, more than a hundred mages comprise the Society, but they are rarely found together as their personal interests are as varied as any. Usually, the Society breaks down into coteries, each devoted to their own special interests. At least once per year, the entire group meets, usually in the private home of one of the members or at an inn or hostelry appropriated for the purpose. It is rumored to be quite an event, which on more than one occasion in the Free City's long history, has ended in a remarkable display of sorcerous artistry, foolery, or bravado.

Currently, the Society of Magi lies mired in a struggle for leadership. Kieren Jalucian, the Master of the Guild of Wizardry, is the interregnum President until a new election can be held, due to the untimely death and disappearance of the mage, Otiluke. Jalucian is unsuitable for the permanent post, unless he gives up his position as Guildmaster (lest mages be under-represented on the Oligarchy due to his double-duty), which he seems unlikely to do. Word also has it that a small cadre within the group has come across a most audacious plan to build a flying ship. They cite similar plans in Gradsul, Dyvers, and Radigast City as impetus, but ironically have the resources of all three put together. Another group seeks to restore the ruins of the infamous Castle Greyhawk, making it the society's new headquarters. Such plans have been discussed for a century, but have been always abandoned due to strong opposition from one faction or another. However, Tenser's recent disappearance took away the strongest leader of the opposition to such plans. And, since he is no longer around to voice his often vehement objections, yet another expedition is being planned to this most mysterious edifice to see if a reclamation is indeed possible. Skilled adventurers are currently being engaged for the task.

### **The Council of Wizards of Winetha:**

The largest group (60+) of independent Aerdy mages outside of the great cities of Rel Deven and Rel Astra. While generally considered to be a modestly prolific, though highly inventive lot, the Council are known to number many great enchanters and artificers (i.e. they excel most greatly in the craft of magic, rather than its practice) and are credited with the creation of many common magical implements, such as potions, wands, and a plethora of sorcerous armaments.

By their own official charter (which was sanctioned by the Overking Manshen in the Common Year 102), the group is strictly democratic and all major decisions involving this self-styled "guild" must be put to the Council. While

dissent is common, it has not been allowed to interfere with the daily business of the city of Winetha or its collective interests. It is this kind of codified collegiality and collective strength which has kept the Council of Wizards together before, during, and even after the recent Great War. The Overking has long lost the ability to compel them into direct service, nonetheless, they continue to perform some of the duties once required of them by the Malachite Throne (usually limited to minor magical resupply and advice on matters arcane.)

Why this is so remains unknown. The nominal head of the Council of Wizards is Prince Lakaster, skilled archmage (probably the most powerful mage in the region), and the lord and suzerain of the city-state of Winetha. In political matters involving the other lords of the realm or the Crown, the Council of Wizards defer to the Prince without question, but in day-to-day affairs, the collective group of sorcerers are otherwise the undisputed stewards of this Aerdian port city, seeing to all of its needs and defenses. Due to their own self-interests (and somewhat suspicious natures), outside mages are rarely allowed to join the Council, but visitors are tolerated, even welcomed should they bear some magic or artifact of interest to the guild, or even news of the outside world so long as it does not threaten Lakaster or his interests. In that respect, he is most probably the greatest threat to the guild's continued existence, for it is well known that the mage harbors ambitions that far exceed those of his brethren, although the fruition of these ambitions remains to be seen.

### **The Silent Ones of Keoland:**

This ancient society is almost entirely closed to outsiders, but it holds significant, though tacit influence over all other Keoish guilds and throughout the valley of the Sheldomar. Emanating from the infamous Tower of Silence [which the Silent Ones and locals of Suel extraction call "Shraal-Tal'mara"] less than a days ride south from Niole Dra, the silent brothers are said to form the backbone of an ancient order that seeks to protect what is reputed to be the last vestige of Ancient Suel magic that has remained in continuous hands since the Rain of Colorless Fire, over a millennium ago. Whether the order of the silent ones is actually this old, is both uncertain and difficult to uncover, since they communicate little outside of their own circles.

An architectural wonder, the Tower of Silence is an alien structure that seems to defy all the laws of sensibility. Erupting from the ground without any base or support, like the trunk of a great tree, it rises to the sky almost a thousand feet high, completely and totally dominating the flat and featureless plain that surrounds it. No mage who casts eyes upon it can deny the fact that it would be nearly impossible to construct today, since great sorcery was no doubt required during its construction. The blue-grey stone that composes it

has no counterpart in more than a thousand miles. Legends abound as to its origins.

As for its inhabitants, the Silent Ones [who call themselves the "Shraal-Kha'dum", a Suel phrase that can often be roughly translated as 'Those Who Must Not Speak'] live an existence apart, completely free of the ruling Keoish King according to the first line of the founding charter of the nation, penned nearly a thousand years ago. The Tower itself is headed by a single undisputed leader called the Wyrd (currently, Mohrgyr the Old) and it is staffed by dozens of adherents (namely, the brothers). Their true numbers remain unknown, but are thought to be small, shrinking with every passing year. The Shraal also have smaller enclaves in a handful of Keoish cities from which they travel the countryside in missions and tasks that they appear to keep closely to themselves (thus their appellation, since they are by no means thought to be mute). One thing is for certain, they seem to be drawn to ancient places of strong magical power and import.

This limited treatise can only begin to scratch the surface of the true tale of the Silent Ones, a tale that will be told another time. (See 'The Chronicle of Secret Times' by Uhas of Neheli for more information.) One recent note, however, the activities of those calling themselves the Scarlet Ones seems to have drawn the attention of the usually withdrawn Shraal. To what end, no one is quite certain.

### **The Conclave Arcanum of Dyvers:**

An influential guild, particularly in the adjacent Kingdom of Furyondy which sports no other significant magical guilds. This city is of course, the major trade link between the east and west along the Nyr Dyv and the mostly navigable Volverdyva, thus making it an important trade and travel center. The long-lived magical organization here is generally considered to be in decline, directly in proportion to the rise of the Greyhawk guild in it's fast growing and petulant sister city to the east. The Conclave is many centuries old (at least as old as the Sagacious Society of Nyronnd) and was perhaps the first modern guild to be established in the Flanaess. It currently occupies a series of low towers in the hills above the main districts of the City of Sails (these were constructed about two and a half centuries ago, just prior to the rise of Zagig Yragerne), though the guild still holds significant influence on the streets and wharves of Dyvers, itself. The Conclave also maintains an impressive meeting hall on one of the many islets in the Lake Quarter, linked only to the mainland by a single invisible bridge that is said to be highly unnerving to negotiate, keeping most save the initiated from paying unwelcome visits to the group.

Many credit (or blame, as the case may be) the Conclave Arcanum for the city's decision to declare itself free and independent of the Kingdom of Furyondy in CY 525, because the then Magister of the city, Ghorannus, was also head of the Conclave and leader of the opposition to the growing Velunese influence in the city's affairs. Just as the city's Magister is chosen, so does the Conclave choose its leadership by a quasi-democratic recognition of merit. This assures that the best and wisest usually rise to the top, but that has not always been the case (a certain amount of haughtiness pervades the organization.) While the list of the Conclave Arcanum's membership is impressive, many note that the list of those denied a place in the society is equally impressive. Zagig Yragerne, Keoghtom, Karzalin, Otiluke, and even the puissant mage, Mordenkainen, were all denied access at one time or another.

The guild currently suffers from a total lack of self confidence (probably owing to a near-complete lack of distinction in recent years), allowing itself to be drawn into squabbles with Greyhawk and certain intrigues with the Cult of Iuz, believed to be gaining a foothold in the undercity.

### **The Sign of the Red Talisman in Zeif:**

This may or may not be a true guild, since little is known about this organization in the east (less even, than the mysterious Zashassar). The Talisman is believed to be headed by a small group of independent and powerful Bakluni archmages who directly oppose the interests of the predominant Zashassari and who appear to contemplate a "Greater Bakluna", encompassing all lands east as far as the Nyr Dyv and west, to the borders of the legendary Suhfang Kingdom. Living in great soaring towers and seldom, if ever, setting foot in the streets of the great City of Zeif, it is unknown if these mages ever congregate in the traditional sense. They undoubtedly crave magic and its secrets and they are suspected of seeking to uncover the lost sorcery that once brought their ancestors (and their ancient enemies, the Suel) to heights never before known by Man. Numerous apprentices support the often varied interests of these personages in the courts of Tusmit, Ket, and Ull, (though they are certainly ill-received in Ekbir.)

The Talisman are known to consort with Efreet, Dao, and even more exotic beings (some whisper that even the Princes of Elemental Evil are involved here) on occasion, including some recent overtures to the Tyrant of Dorakaa, with whom they are somehow believed to be acquainted (it is often rumored that this vital link is provided by none other than the dreaded, Kermin). How these offers have been received is unknown, but they appear to have borne some fruit, nonetheless (see below). The de facto leader of the Talisman may or may not be the infamous Tuerny the Merciless, thrice dead sorcerer of legend (surprisingly, many rumors also hold that he is not even of Baklunish decent).

Should this malign being truly continue to walk the Flanaess, he is almost certainly doing so amongst the undead (many suspect him of being no less than a Lich.) Nonetheless, though these rumors persist, nothing is expected to confirm them any time soon.

Recent evidence exists to suggest that The Talisman assisted the Ketites and the Beygraf Zoltan in the capture of the east-west buffer state known as the March of Bissel (again, the role of Iuz in these matters makes the prospect of collusion likely). The Talisman are also believed to be closely tied to the Sultan Murad and his infamous court and they are further rumored to be an instrument of his will, or perhaps vice-versa. While this is unlikely, the Sultan and his forces grow increasingly belligerent towards Ekbir, even as they move to secure treaties with Tusmit and Ket.

### **The Eldritch Lords of Rel Deven:**

This society was founded in the second of the three great Aerdian cities of the "Enlightenment" (the first being Rel Mord, which later became the capital of Nyronnd, and the third and final being Rel Astra, the imperial crown jewel and one time capital of the whole of the Kingdom of Aerdy, before Nasran I established Rauxes following his imperial ascendancy). The Eldritch Lords are a most enigmatic group about which little is currently known outside their own city. This isolation began long before the recent wars which made it thorough and complete, however. They were once a consortium of skilled mages and artificers that guarded, developed, and duplicated some of the ancient secrets of High Oeridian magic for the Overkings of old. In this role over the centuries, they created heroic weapons, staffs and symbols of office, and even ensorcelled whole buildings, fortresses, ships, and towers. That role changed during the Turmoil Between the Crowns, when the (largely Cramden) Eldritch Lords refused to pledge allegiance to the first Naelaxian Overking, Ivid I of the North. The Eldritch Lords spirited away much of the Malachite Throne's magic that was still in their possession and closed their ancient and prodigious archives to his Celestial Supremacy's heralds until as they intimated, "a true heir of Nasran sits upon the Celestial Seat of Heaven". Their collective power enforced their determination, and despite a few unsuccessful skirmishes over the decades between CY 446 and the recent wars, they remained intact.

Their organization evolved somewhat (rarely do they don the stiff, high-backed lacquered collars of office that once towered a foot over their shoulders), and their direct influence in the City of Rel Deven has grown over the last century and a half (they abandoned all ties in Rauxes). They've undoubtedly become one of the most dominant power nodes in the city. The Eldritch Lords, obviously, refused the summons of the Overking during the great war and for that, Ivid V laid siege to the city even as Almor and

its capital, Chathold, were put to the torch. Half a thousand men from Ahlissa in the South Province and eleven hundred levies from the central fiefdoms marched to take the city and enforce the Overking's will. In the end, only a token force survived, claiming that fiery death rained down from the heavens to swallow the great host amassed outside the city's gates. Rel Deven, however, lay totally untouched.

The city has remained entirely independent ever since, an unsullied jewel in the broken Aerdy crown. Unfortunately, with the diabolical Duke Szeffrin to the north and the scheming Herzog Reydrich in Zelradton to the south, the city is isolated and virtually inaccessible to outsiders (though they are thought to be welcome). So far, the long-term intentions of The Eldritch Lords continue to remain a mystery and yet one can't help but feel that some great secret lies buried just beneath the surface of their cold, solemn faces.

### **The Sorcerous Union of Radigast City:**

This is a small but robust guild that may or may not have the most noted school of illusion in the Flanaess (while still a matter of opinion, there is no doubting the skills of some of their membership). Together, they are a fairly independent group of mages, patterning themselves much after the Guild of Wizardry of Greyhawk with whom they feel some kinship and friendly rivalry. They lack the latter's resources and prestige (and infamous and legendary patron, Zagig Yragerne), but are nonetheless trying to position themselves to become the next center of magic on the Nyr Dyv. Their motive is less political, rather than simply appealing to the questionable virtues of magedom and the Art and the Craft. Their hopes continue to approach realization as a small group of foreign sorcerers (including two archmages) joined them quite recently from Nyron, Almor, and the Shield Lands.

Currently, Radigast City has become the most open port on the Nyr Dyv and the primary destination of lake traffic leaving the vicinity of the Cities of Greyhawk and Dyvers. It is the gateway for the trade and travel moving eastward to Nyron and beyond that seeks to avoid the former Shield Lands and all of the lands of the Old One. Growing by leaps and bounds like their urban home, the Sorcerous Union has recently secured permission from her noble brilliancy, the Countess Belissica for the construction of a new guildhall within the precincts of the city. A small multitude of artisans have been commissioned to work on the project (including the efforts of the Union itself, of course) which is expected to result in a wondrous new addition to the magical architecture of the Flanaess. If the plans hold true, no less than four huge towers will support a massive spherical edifice with an open air cylindrical center overlooking a public courtyard. Numerous "special" items

required in the construction are being contracted out for discrete "acquisition".

(Adventurer's take note: five gallons of the milk of a Marilith's teat figures prominently and will be remunerated for quite richly.)

### **MINOR:**

(Most cities sport some sort of a mage's guild [a rare few have more than one], but most do not share anywhere near the influence and power of the above organizations. Most magical cabals number anywhere between a handful to a dozen mages and are often located in the local temple of Boccob. While I will not go on to name them all, here are a brief selection.)

Noteworthy Examples of Smaller Guilds Include: (including a thumbnail sketch)

**Veluna City:** The Society of Enlightened Mages (or simply, the Enlightened Society) is a small and erudite lot that includes branches in Verbobonc (where they are known as the Silver Consortium), Mitrik, Devarnish, and a headquarters in the largest city of Veluna. They are highly noted diviners and well regarded scholars, acquiring quite a patronage in the lands of Ferrond (comprising Furyondy, Veluna and the Shield Lands), who seek them out for their sagistry and insight. They are known to have many priests (particularly of Boccob and Rao) and mage-priests in residence. Political involvement is generally regarded to be nil.

**Niole Dra:** The National Academy of Wizardry. Small but countrywide, this guild includes a chapter in every Keoish city and town of consequence. These chapters are organized to be fairly independent of each other, save in name. Their power has waxed and waned over the centuries and they are currently in decline. At one time the National Academy regulated nearly all magic in the nation, save that in the hands of the Silent Ones (see, A History of Keoish Aggression). They granted licenses to practice magic and sanctioned the production of magical items. Now, they exert no such influence, barely even able to sway their own membership. In most respects they are a middling group of middling mages, with all too middling ambitions. Lashton, the court wizard and close councilor to the King of Keoland ([in]famous for leading the recovery of Istivin during the unfortunate incident of some years ago), has recently assumed the presidency of the Academy. This may herald some interesting changes, but we must watch and wait, since the Archmage is believed to be extremely ambitious.

**Gradsul:** The branch of the National Academy of Wizardry in Gradsul is unusually weak, given the large size of this

Keoish port city, as is the local enclave of the Silent Ones. The group calling themselves "The Sea Mages", however, are the truly fashionable guild of this city, and by far, they are the most active. Aside from the common functions of this guild, they also work to keep the Scarlet Brotherhood and their Sea Prince conspirators in check and have so far met with some good successes. Their members work closely with the royal navies and mercantile companies to ensure Gradsul's security and free access to trade across the Azure Sea. Many have pledged themselves to act as a bulwark to the southern menace, so all hope may not be lost.

**Exag:** An ancient and little known society calling themselves simply "The Illuminated Ones". They play almost no role in the current politics of Perrenland. In fact, Exag is often treated as a city unto itself, and is said to be far more ancient than anything within a thousand miles of it, including in the Lands of the Bakluni. Nothing short of a direct investigation is liable to reveal more.

**Rel Astra:** A smaller, more recent organization, calling themselves the "Scholars of the Arcane", sits quietly beneath the shadow of the Sorcerer's Nexus. They interact little outside of their own circles (requiring little it seems, save the free exchange of magic and information) and are thought to be quite skillful and wizened old men who plot little but their own research.

**Rookroost:** The once keen and able Warlocks of Rookroost organized (and to great extent still do) a large network of agent-mages in the former Bandit Kingdoms, providing all the trappings of a guild. While not by any means a charitable or scholarly organization, the mages that found themselves amongst the Warlocks simply had no place in the more civilized and law-fearing South. It is thought that many of them despise Iuz and pay paltry lip service to his stewards. Others of course, have embraced their new Master wholeheartedly, finding his tastes to their liking. It is certain that some of the Warlocks even work towards the Old One's downfall, whereby in an ironic twist of fate, the one time oppressors become the oppressed.

**Molag:** The Necromancy was, before the war, a "thriving" guild in the City of Shadows. Its current status remains unknown, as is their disposition towards the Tyrant of Dorakaa, that is, should they even have survived the night of the Blood Moon massacre. Nonetheless, it is known that the guild often opposed the Hierarchs in the past, save perhaps, certain priests of the Dark One, Nerull. Their role in current matters remains entirely clouded, though rumors persist of strong resistance in the undercity beneath the stinking streets of Molag.

**Sefmur:** The abstruse "Order of the Inner Flame" continues to exist in the old capital of Tusmit, side-by-side more traditional yet less distinctive guilds. They practice a variety

of magic nearly totally unheard of (and little understood) in modern times, namely, manipulating the ambient energies of the multiverse with the powers of their minds. 'Look to Zuoken' is a common catch-phrase amongst this group.

**Nevond Nevnd:** "The Keepers of the Flan" were largely a ceremonial congregation until the fateful beginning of the Great War. Supposedly guarding the magical secrets of the Flannae (less erudite scholars insist there were none to guard), they have now turned to attempting to liberate their homeland from the hordes of Stonefist and the grip of the Dark Lord of the Howling Hills. The Keepers were able to escape as the uncertain darkness came, but refused to abandon their homeland for the hated Pale and the ineffectual Nyron. They fight for the freedom of their nation, and are thought to do so from hidden enclaves in the Griff Mountains. The mage, Nystul, is thought to be their greatest benefactor.

**Seltaren/Leukish:** The Wizardholme of Urnst finds it's primary headquarters in the large inland city of the Duchy, far away from the lakeward bustle of the capital, Leukish, although the latter sports a sizable chapter, as well. A traditional group, their eyes have usually looked south and east, to the Abbor-Alz and the Celadon Forest. Their most luminous member is currently the Archmage Warnes Starcoat, Chief Sorcerous Councilor to the Joint Courts of Urnst (who rose to the post after the mysterious disappearance of the Seer of Urnst). At one time the legendary mage Keoghtom numbered among them, before he retreated to the depths of the Celadon, where it is whispered he remains to this very day. Today, the Wizard-holme grows increasingly concerned about the activity of the archmage calling himself the "Emperor of the Bright Desert", from whom one spy has already been necessarily dispatched after he was uncovered in their very sanctums.

**Monmurg:** A group calling themselves the "Wizards of the Coast" is the most infamous gathering of mages in the former lands of the Sea Princes. Never scholarly, or even all that politically inclined, they have always benefited greatly from their position at the gateway to the unknown worlds lying opposite their shores (which the Sea Princes have never been reticent to explore). With influence in both Westkeep and Port Toli, the Wizards are (or at least were) a force to be reckoned with which has however, seen better times. The Scarlet Brotherhood's agents have thus far found it difficult to outmaneuver them, albeit, the persistence of the Scarlet Ones will no doubt eventually break these stalwart mages unless some kind of succor is soon to be forthcoming.

BAKLUNISH DELIGHTS:

## THE MISTRESS OF PERFECTION AND HER SERVANT

by Erik Mona (Iquander@aol.com)

The relationship between gods and men among the remnants of the Baklunish Empire, as a whole, is perhaps the most practical of all such veneration on Oerth. Most Bakluni can be said to be truly pantheistic, and though certain gods such as Al-Akbar and the four elemental forces are probably the most widely honored of these beings, few hold such an enduring place in the hearts of the Baklunish people as does Xan Yae, the Mistress of Perfection. As a physical and mental personification of perfection, Xan Yae is seen as the ideal, the form for which all should strive.

In this way, Xan Yae is considered the driving spirit of humanity. As legends tell, it was the Bakluni drive to gain a sliver of her perfection that saw the inception of the Baklunish Empire so very long ago, and, though the lands are now largely fractured, she still stands as a marker against which all achievements are measured.

Perhaps because Xan Yae has shared such a strong tie to the Bakluni, she has often directly intervened in their affairs. Though her manipulations are never overt, she has been known to favor the Bakluni over all the races of Oerth, and has subtly aided their struggles in the past. On at least one occasion, this has brought firm reprimands from the other gods, and while she no longer enjoys personal visits with her temporal caliphs, she is perhaps the most "active" of the Baklunish deities.

Her clergy, the D'ai Shaton, are as old as the empire itself, and have served in the capacity of official state religion (though the clergy of Al-Akbar currently enjoys such a position) and arbiters of common law. As Xan Yae is acknowledged by the Bakluni as perfection incarnate, so are her clerics seen as nearly flawless specimens of humanity.

They are, of course, far from the true status of the ideal exemplified by the Mistress of Perfection herself, but their rigid adherence to her doctrines and veneration of her form has pleased her considerably, and Xan Yae has granted her caliphs several advantages over the enemies of the empire.

One such gift is the Edel, the practice of controlling the ambient energies of the mind, which was said to have been revealed to the D'ai Shaton nearly a millennia before the first battles of the great war with the Suel. The Edel, or

"gift of fate", had existed since the beginning of the Oerth, but it was Xan Yae's revelation that allowed mankind to truly tap its boundless power. Knowing that the development of the power was largely indiscriminate, she ordered her clergy to take advantage of it, a task they set to with ambition and vigor.

The Edel was confusing to the D'ai Shaton, for it developed at random and very infrequently, to Baklunish, Oeridians and even among the hated Suel, who even then attempted to enslave their northern neighbors. Those found to be gifted, regardless of nationality, were usually kidnapped and taken to the Mosque of Symmetry (located in the heart of what would become the Dry Steppes), where they were taught to harness their power with secrets passed from the lips of the goddess herself. These new initiates were labeled the Abid dal Xan, or "gifted of the mistress", and they soon rose to ranks of power within the D'ai Shaton.

Several centuries later, when the chaos of civil war within the empire consumed nearly a third of the D'ai Shaton, the caliph of the time spent three days and nights in council with her goddess, until a plan had been formulated to protect her followers from further violence. Weeks later, Xan Yae's caliph personally chose several of the most able and fit of the D'ai Shaton to become a cadre of perfectly trained warriors. She named them D'ai Shatain, and their training began on the first official day of the restabilized empire.

With the help of the Abid dal Xan, the order developed a complicated weaponless combat known as Da'shon, falling hail. Since rain was sparse in the region, and hail even less infrequent, the D'ai Shatain likened their forms to the unexpected powers of nature and the elements. As the D'ai Shaton had long preached that weapons were a hindrance to the perfection of mankind, the development of Da'shon as a form of weaponless combat was essential, and the order soon became renowned as deadly but honorable protectors of the D'ai Shaton clerics. The Abid dal Xan were seen as the perfect representation of Xan Yae's mental aspect, and now the D'ai Shatain were viewed as the perfect representation of her physical aspect. Like the mentalists before them, these new fighting monks rose to positions of power within the established clergy.

Such rapid advancement didn't sit well with all of the members of the D'ai Shaton, specifically those among the Abid dal Xan who had come to expect certain promotions within the clergy after a given amount of progress or service. The advent of an entirely new branch of the order changed the structure of the whole considerably, and it is highly likely that many a qualified individual was passed up at this time in favor of the more influential members of the D'ai Shatain. Such occurrences bothered the mentalists, but all complaints were met with the same cold response.

The Caliph was indeed great, some of the Abid dal Xan stressed, but can she read the thoughts of another? Is she able to lift objects with a simple thought? How could she not have foreseen the destruction that ushered in the new age of the Baklunish Empire? Many among those bearing the Edel had warned the Caliph of the oncoming danger, but she had ignored them. Was it possible that the Mistress' one chosen representative on Oerth could be so imperfect? Within a decade, nearly half of the Abid dal Xan looked upon the Caliph, and her D'ai Shatain, with contempt.

The first among the Abid dal Xan to abandon the D'ai Shaton brought worried looks from the Caliph's advisors. The man, one Daiid, had been one of the greatest trainers among the psions. He had used the original teachings of the mistress herself and expanded them in creative and highly successful ways. Though the lifestyle of the entire order could best be described as ascetic, Daiid had been a celebrity within the D'ai Shaton. When three lesser trainers likewise left the order, the Caliph herself was said to have spent the better part of a week attempting to contact her patron. She was, however, unsuccessful, and the following year saw almost a third of the Abid dal Xan across the empire follow Daiid's example. The Caliph had their names read aloud in the Mosque of Symmetry, and she branded each individual an infidel, Jafel, and called for their capture.

The year, as the Bakluni measured them, was 2143. Things would not improve.

The Suel, still bitter over the internal squabbles that had seen their best chance at Bakluni conquest pass them by, looked upon the Jafel and smiled. Many of the Jafel fell in with neighboring Suel nobility and, for a price, conducted psychic espionage on the Baklunish Empire. Certainly not all of the Jafel defected so, and it is known that this information brought some three score of the heretics crawling back on their knees, begging the Caliph for forgiveness. History does not record their fate.

Magical scrying had long been used by both the Suel and the Bakluni. Indeed, it was a popular theory in the southern empire that the Abid dal Xan existed solely for the purpose of espionage, though this was staunchly denied by the D'ai Shaton. As the situation developed, it appeared as though little could be done to staunch the oncoming flow of horrible violence. Finally, pressed into action by the circumstance that surrounded them, the D'ai Shaton ordered certain of the Abid dal Xan to probe into the affairs of their southern neighbors.

The state into which the Jafel had fled was one of the northern holds of the Suel people and, while technically considered a border front, its land had been overfarmed and its forests cut to the stumps. It was a veritable wasteland which, for whatever reason, held a remarkably small standing

army. It seemed as though the Suelite Emperor, having long ago used the land to its maximum potential, held it now only as a favor for some small and largely insignificant lordling. In an effort to increase his status within the empire, that lordling had harbored heretics of the Baklunish Empire.

Seeing the tense situation at risk here while appreciating the strategic value of the Jafel (mental powers rarely developed amongst the Suel), the Suel Emperor offered a full company of soldiers to the petty noble. The Abid dal Xan, scrying from their monasteries to the north, discovered with horror that, once they had organized in the nearby Suel city of Pardos, this company would be difficult to overcome. The Bakluni needed a small strike force if a full-scale war was to be averted.

Relations between the Bakluni and Suel had worsened considerably in the previous centuries, and open warfare was a regular, if half-hearted, occurrence. The newly established Padishah-Kings understood the significance of the Jafel's treason, and wished to act quickly. They conferred with the elemental Mage-Priests and, at the Caliph's suggestion, decided to send the D'ai Shatain against the Jafel and their Suel handlers.

Only one monastery to Xan Yae existed within a week's ride of the Suel state, but it sent its full complement of perfect warriors. All told, 38 men, under the wise command of Zuoken, a full master of Da'shon, rode south to confront the Jafel and their twisted controller. When they arrived, however, they learned of a horrible deception.

The Jafel were among the most powerful and promising of the Abid dal Xan, and their independence from Xan Yae's instructions had allowed them to experiment with their powers in new and dangerous ways. When the D'ai Shatain arrived at the outskirts of the capital town of the Suel state, they realized that one of the infidels had used her power to confuse the Abid dal Xan's spies. The Imperial Company did not ready in Pardos, for they were already at their destination! Perhaps worst of all, Daiid himself stood at the head of the assembly. Disheartened by this development, Zuoken nonetheless ordered his small retinue ahead and, without a single weapon between them, the D'ai Shatain of Sefin Monastery confronted the Suel host.

The battle lasted nearly a full day and, at the end, Zuoken stood alone amongst great carnage. He had survived a thousand cuts and twice as many blows. It seemed indeed that he had been favored by the Mistress of Perfection herself. Others in his company had fought well, too, but none lived to see the following morning. Zuoken returned to the Mosque of Symmetry to much aplomb. He met with his brothers and sisters of the D'ai Shatain and told them of a message he had received from Xan Yae herself. He was to travel to the Dramidj Ocean without boat or weapon,

whereupon he would receive further instruction. He told them of his battle, of his reliance upon Da'shon and the aid of Xan Yae. He told them that he would return in 38 nights.

In the weeks that followed, the D'ai Shaton scoured the coast of the Dramidj, but no sign of Zuoken could be found. On the night of the 38th day, Zuoken did return. In the minds of the most proficient D'ai Shatain and Abid dal Xan, a vision of Zuoken entreated them to leave the clergy of Xan Yae and devote themselves completely to mental and physical mastery. He suggested the Ulsprue mountains, to the north, and delineated the plans for four monasteries to be built there by hand. He named the warriors under his watchful eye the Al D'ai Shatain and the mental masters and mistresses the Zefim.

On the following morn, those who had had the vision feared the reaction of their leaders amongst the D'ai Shaton. To their surprise, it seemed as though many of the clergy had experienced similar messages. Indeed, those so visited by Zuoken were given a glorious feast and were peacefully released the following week. They embarked upon the journey to the Ulsprues together and, upon reaching the highlands, they split up into four monasterial groupings. Within the year, four new structures stood on those mountains, each led by two individuals, one representing the Al D'ai Shatain and one representing the Zefim.

The organization of the followers of Zuoken has survived more or less intact since the months of its inception. Decades after their formation, when economic and political considerations had enflamed the relations between the Suel and the Bakluni, Zuoken's followers refused to enter the conflict. They remained aloof, declaring the wars the pursuit of those ridden with the imperfections of mundane life and the burden of wealth, and remained in their Ulsprue monasteries. Two of the those structures were destroyed in the Invoked Devastation, their surviving members becoming the D'ar es Shalim, Those Without Homes. These men and women traveled in all directions, ministering to those of their faith and, in the worst of times, once again serving as protectors of the D'ai Shaton. They helped the refugees of the magical destruction settle in Zeif and beyond and, in this way, a relatively small cult gained wide appreciation within the remains of greater Bakluni society.

Their organization has changed little since then, save that the term D'ar es Shalim has expanded to include those of the Al D'ai Shatain and Zefim who travel the world in search of its secrets. These men and women can be found as far East as the lands of the Schnai, though such mingling with Suel is extremely rare. There is a known, but small, monastery in the Duchy of Urnst and many more enclaves across the Flanaess. To the West, who knows? Some speak of followers of Zuoken in the lands of the Suhfang Kingdom,

Tsing-Chu, and even amongst the Changa of the south, though little is known and still less can be proven.

## The Ascension of Zuoken

The legend of Zouken's voyage to the shores of the Dramidj and beyond is a common tale told by Baklunish mothers to inspire their children. It is said that the warrior, upon reaching the azure waters, received a vision of the distant Pinnacles of Azor'alq. Having no boat upon which to cross the distance, he stepped carefully upon the water and, with only his trust in the infallibility of his mistress, he walked across the churning waves to the spires of Bakluni lore.

Upon reaching the central spire, he single-handedly combatted aquatic creatures of all varieties, including several types of rare and unknown dragons. He then climbed the spire without a rope or pitons, again trusting the vision he had been granted by Xan Yae herself. Upon the summit, Zuoken braced himself for his most arduous challenge yet, for atop the spire, the legendary Azor'alq, Guardian of the Shrine of Pools, awaited with his brace of paladins.

Instead of giving the servant of Al-Akbar the fight that had been planned for him, Zuoken instead parleyed with Azor'alq, and the two became fast friends. In this way, Zuoken is the only mortal known to have tread upon the home of the Baklunish gods.

Upon entering the Shrine of Pools, Zuoken was greeted with the spinning vortices that led to the personal realms of each god venerated by the Bakluni. In the center, he saw the golden-hued portal that led to the tower of Al-Zarad. There was the largest portal, that of Al-Akbar himself. Directly opposite, the dull black gate to the realm of Tharoth, the Reaper, throbbled its painful ambiance. Concentrating intently, he chose correctly the portal of his mistress, and was instantly transported to her fantastic lair.

There, he met with Xan Yae herself, as well as several other guests, including the enigmatic Catlord. This conglomeration of divine beings set him on a journey throughout the planes that would test if he truly represented the utmost ability in physical and mental mastery. These trials were difficult, but Zuoken passed each in turn, and Xan Yae released an amount of divine energy into Zuoken sufficient to elevate him to the status of demigodhood.

To this day, Zuoken's clergy celebrates their god's trials in the 38 day Cycle of Azor'alq, which also honors each member of Zuoken's original monastery that died on the field of battle. Likewise, the Pinnacles of Azor'alq are considered a holy site to the clergy.

The followers of Zuoken remain on good terms with the priests of Al-Akbar, and this arrangement has followed them to the Flanaess, where the church of Pelor has acted as one of their greatest benefactors.

## **Xan Yae and Zuoken: Relations**

All evidence suggests that Xan Yae and Zuoken are the closest of allies. In fact, Zuoken's area of concern is entirely within that of his mistress. Therefore, their relationship is similar to that shared by Boccob and Zagyg. Since the Invoked Devastation/Rain of Colorless Fire, Xan Yae has been bound not to interfere in the events of Oerth. In many ways, Zuoken and his followers are her way of breaking that covenant.

Since the Twin Cataclysms, the Mistress herself almost never confers with the Caliph of the D'ai Shaton. Instead, she relays her messages through Zuoken and, in times of great need, the demigod has actively interfered in the events of Oerik (though recent events seem to have changed this -- see below). Since the goals of the duo are so personal and esoteric, however, the need for such action is scant, indeed.

The relations between the clergies are somewhat different, however, as the D'ai Shaton scarcely holds conference with the distant worshippers of Zuoken. Those among the Al D'ai Shatain and Zefim who travel away from the Ulspries, however, are often housed in the mosques of the D'ai Shaton. Both the Abid dal Xan and D'ai Shatain still exist, but they are seen today as inferiors to the followers of Zuoken who, both because of their isolation and force of will, have devoted themselves more fully to perfection. The D'ai Shaton at large has subtly changed their focus over the years, so that the "twilight" aspect of their worship has now eclipsed the mental and physical mastery aspect, though the shift has been minor and extended over a vast stretch of time.

## **The Al D'ai Shatain and Zefim**

### **Organization, Function and Duties**

The hierarchy of the organized followers of Zuoken can be broken into two groups. Each monastery (there are currently three major monasteries operating on Oerik, with several of lesser importance found primarily among the Baklunish states) is ruled by two individuals, one from the Al D'ai Shatain and one from the Zefim. These individuals are said to represent the closest to physical or mental mastery of all residents of the monastery.

The Al D'ai Shatain and Zefim differ from the organized followings of nearly every deity presiding over

Oerth in that they are not, as such, a clergy. Though the monasterial leaders of the past are said to have regularly contacted their patron, such conference has not been celebrated for many decades.

Zuoken's "clergy" is based upon unswerving faith in Da'shon and the teachings of Zuoken, which were taken from Sefin Monastery (somewhere in the Sulhaut Mountains, though the exact location has been lost to antiquity), copied diligently, and stored in the four original monasteries. Highly magical artifacts in their own right, the scrolls stored in the southernmost Ulsprie monasteries are believed to have survived the Devastation, though the thieves that stole them centuries ago apparently brought the secret of their current location to the grave.

Because the doctrines of their master implore them to rise to the pinnacle of human ability, and become as perfect as Zuoken himself (though even the most devout declare Xan Yae somewhat more successful than even their master) without the aid of gods, Zuoken does not grant his worshippers magical ability in the form of spells. Instead, it is believed that he allocates a portion of his considerable power to all of the Al D'ai Shatain and Zefim, and though such a relationship cannot be proven, to claim as much to a monk of the order is to invite an angered challenge.

The duties of Zuoken's followers are many, though the ultimate cause in all things is to improve oneself. For this reason, they are often seen as selfish, though such a distinction is not entirely accurate. Philosophically, Zuoken taught an extension of Xan Yae's own teachings; true perfection can only come when each side of an issue is considered, and a balance is struck.

Specific duties vary from monastery to monastery, from Al D'ai Shatain to the Zefim. Generally, it is the responsibility of all monks to instruct their lessers in the ways of Zuoken and the rigorous training of Da'shon. Secondary responsibilities include tending to the monasterial grounds, seeing to the elderly (because of their emphasis on physical perfection, many monks of the Al D'ai Shatain fear aging, and this duty prepares them for the times when their backs will no longer be straight, their muscles no longer taut), and general support of the D'ai Shaton. There are nomissionaries among Zuoken's stoic followers.

### **Zuoken's Monasteries**

There are three well-known monasteries to Zuoken on Oerik, though it is certainly possible to find his followers far from these secluded locations. The first, and perhaps most influential of these structures is located on a mountain peak in the northernmost spur of the Ulsprie Mountains.

This, the Falla-nil Monastery, is home to the most powerful among the Zuoken's adherents. It is within the walls of Falla-nil that the original scrolls of Zuoken rest, heavily protected by both traditional magic and the mental wards of the Zefim. Indeed, the current Zefim leader is likely the most powerful psionic individual ever to have lived, as her incredible ability has been greatly augmented by careful study of the scrolls. This has caused some rivalry between her counterpart, the leader of Falla-nil's Al D'ai Shatain, but little but petty disagreements have been the result.

Some sixty miles south rests the Azor-khem monastery, which is said to have been the favorite visitation site of Zuoken. Because the patron has not been seen in over eighty years, this monastery has fallen into disfavor by its northern brethren. Though few would dare speak such, many believe that the monks of Azor-khem in some way alienated their divine patron.

Far, far to the east, the Flannae-tel Monastery is situated in a valley of the Cairn Hills. Technically a part of the Duchy of Urnst (even after the recent treaty that divested much of the hills to the care of Greyhawk), the monks here pay a heavy tithe, and were largely unaffected by Duke Justinian Lorinar's anti-religious edicts that directly resulted in the Temple Coalition Revolt of CY 571. This final structure was built in CY 517 by a group of D'ar es Shalim, who encountered little trouble from the Duke.

It is not known why these homeless monks chose this site, so near the Lake of Unknown Depths, but it is known that the monks and psions stationed there are given unswerving support by their western cohorts.

The current leader of Flannae-tel's Al D'ai Shatain, Master Li Hon (who, strangely, is said to be from the Far-West), is a frequent visitor to Leukish, and a boon companion of Warnes Starcoat, Magical Councilor to the Joint Courts of Urnst. It is even said that a fantastic scrying device was installed in the monastery by the Court Mage shortly before the Greyhawk Wars. Master Li Hon has been a great supporter of both Duke Karll Lorinar and the Archmage, and is said to have been involved in assembling the cadre of wizards now stationed in Leukish Castle.

### **The D'ar es Shalim**

The Al D'ai Shatain and Zefim are a monastic orders, and are thus unlikely to come into widespread contact with a given resident of Oerik, especially if that individual resides in the Flanaess. Still, Al D'ai Shatain and Zefim will occasionally be encountered in cities with high Baklunish populations. Because of their proximity to the Ulspries, Ulakand and Kester are frequent rests for monks traveling north. During the 38 day Cycle of Azor'alq, held every

decade, a large pilgrimage to the shores of the Dramidj is initiated. Since relations between the northern Baklunish and the roving bands of Paynim warriors are often strained, large bands of friendly horsemen escort the monks to the border of Zeif, a task for which they are paid handsomely.

The D'ar es Shalim, on the other hand, are likely to be found in any location of the continent, especially since they have been sent out from the monastery, or are relatives of the original D'ar es Shalim, those monks and psions who lost their homes in the Invoked Devastation. This latter sect of the traveling monks has been in decline since the great wars, and they are often Al D'ai Shatain and Zefim in name only, knowing little or nothing of the teachings of Zuoken.

The D'ar es Shalim were such until relatively recently. In the mid-570's, several hundred monks of the Al D'ai Shatain and Zefim entered Keoland from Geoff, seemingly in search of something. These individuals caused few problems, and aside from a casual distrust, the folk of the kingdom paid them little mind. In CY 573, a large number of these D'ar es Shalim convoked in Niole Dra, where they later split into several factions. Each of these groups traveled in a different easterly direction. The largest arrived in Leukish in 576, supplementing the small group that had established Flannae-tel several decades earlier.

These new D'ar es Shalim, called the "Seekers" by their eastern neighbors, consulted sages in nearly every major city of the Flanaess, though bribes of rich gems and valuable coins have endeared the continued silence of these learned sages on the matter ever since. Though no easterners seem to know what exactly it is, it is thought that the D'ar es Shalim still seek that which eludes them.

The coincidence of the arrival of the Seekers and the discovery of the Scarlet Brotherhood has not been lost on some scholars. The monks definitely hold no love for their Suel counterparts, and act to unravel their deception on all fronts.

### **Zuoken's Secrets**

Few among even the highest echelons of the D'ai Shatain know what has happened to their master. Indeed, such questions have torn rifts in the relations between the western monasteries, and these rivalries are likely to increase in the future. The heads of the orders do know more than they are willing to admit, however, and the distrust between the groups is now intentionally perpetuated by monasterial leaders of both Falla-nil and the Azor-khem in a fictional schism designed to keep their lessers in the dark. It is a dangerous game, but one the monastic leaders feel is necessary in order that their ways might survive.

The most powerful among the upper tiers of the society have determined the date of Zuoken's disappearance at some time in CY 505. Until the establishment of Flannae-tel, the order's knowledge of the Flanaess was incomplete. Early leaders there, however, discovered a major clue regarding the whereabouts of Zuoken.

At the time of their master's disappearance, several other divine beings worshipped east of the Crystalmists had also vanished. The most noticeable of these, of course, was the cambion Iuz, Lord of the cursed Middle Lands. Because the divinity of this being was not at that time known, and several impostors appeared in the following years, this alone would have been little cause for the monks' celebration. Further research revealed that Merikka, a minor patron of agriculture much honored by the peasant folk of Keoland and her former satellites, had also been removed from her followers.

The monks saw a connection between these events, but the politics of the feud between monasteries prevented any action on behalf of the order's leaders. Then, in CY 570, both Merikka and the True Iuz returned to Oerth, thus proving a connection between the two. Zuoken, however, remained in obscurity.

Convinced that the followers of Merikka would know something of their patron's ordeal, the monastic leaders "awarded" hundreds of Al D'ai Shatain and Zefim with the title "D'ar es Shalim", and ordered them to travel east. When it later became obvious to these men and women that the ineffectual priestesses of Merikka knew nothing of their lady's travails, another answer was sought.

From Keoland, this group split into several factions. One of these groups traveled north, to gain council with Iuz. This group was seen entering the fane gates of Dorakaa, and have not been seen since. It is not likely that they survived the encounter.

Those who remain in the Flanaess still seek the whereabouts of their master. Through careful investigation, they have learned that his manifestation in part is held captive somewhere east of the Lortmils. That territory, however, spans thousands upon thousands of leagues, and they have been long in the searching.

In fact, many D'ar es Shalim grow weary of the search. Some have begun to lose faith in the perfection of a captured master, and have hired themselves out as mercenaries. These individuals are held in great contempt by those with the will to continue, but doubts have crossed the mind of even the most vigilant seeker. For now, they continue to seek the whereabouts of their master, in hopes that their order might become truly perfect again.

[Part Two of this article will include notes on the modern clergies of Xan Yae and full details of the Al D'ai Shatain, Zefim, D'ai Shaton, D'ai Shatain and Abid dal Xan with information on their specific abilities and traits.]

## WITH BÖCCÖB'S BLESSING

(Artifacts and Magic Items of Oerth)

## THE CROOK OF RAO

by Eric L. Boyd (boyd@eecs.umich.edu)

One of the many things that give a world its unique flavor are the artifacts and relics floating around. Greyhawk has more than its fair share, given that all the original artifacts and relics detailed in the first edition *Dungeon Masters Guide* were from Gygax's Greyhawk campaign. However, there is one Greyhawk relic that has never been detailed in an official source to my knowledge, although it is mentioned in several sources. Following is my version of the "Crook of Rao" extrapolated from these sources. Commentary appears in brackets.

Enjoy! Comments and suggestions appreciated.

### The Crook of Rao

The Crook of Rao appears as a short bronzewood staff, approximately four feet in length. It is capped in mithral at both ends and studded with carven gemstones along its entire length. The gemstones alone are worth over 50,000 gp, although none can be removed, damaged, or destroyed.

[The powerful relic known as the Crook of Rao was described by Tenser as "a small mace, albeit one fashioned of iron and silver and encrusted with carven gemstones"<sup>1</sup>. Canon Hazen of Veluna has described it as "a crooked stave"<sup>2</sup>. It may be that the artifact can change form. However, given its name, it is probably best seen as a staff rather than a mace.]

### History

Rao, the serene, detached god of reason, does not act on the Prime Material Plane directly, but he is known to have created several powerful magical artifacts which are highly potent against evil, possibly with the aid of Boccob.

The Crook of Rao appears very early in the annals of the known history of the Flanaess, and may have existed since the creation of Oerth. Much of its history has been lost, even by the priests of Rao. In the *Word of Incarum*, a holy text of the followers of Rao revealed by a movanic deva, it is claimed that the deva, bearing the Crook of Rao, led the faithful to drive out the hordes of Tharizdun prior to the Dark God's banishment.

[Although it is not completely "official", the adventure "Hopeful Dawn", which appeared in the pages of *Dungeon* magazine #41 has additional insight into the faith of Rao<sup>3</sup>. This material is kept consistent with that source as well.]

The Crook was borne by a party of powerful adventurers, including Tenser the Arch-Mage, Lord Robilar, his brother Terik, and the quasi-power Merlynd during their adventures beneath the ruins of Castle Greyhawk circa 569 CY. It is likely that they found the Crook in the dungeons of Zagig Yragerne, although that is not known for sure. Tenser is now dead, Merlynd on other planes, Terik disappeared, and Robilar presumed to have fled to the Bright Desert, so sages may never know where the band acquired the relic.

[The introduction of *Isle of the Ape* is unclear on where the band acquired the Crook of Rao or when they lost it on the Isle of the Ape. The date is approximate, corresponding to the year when the adventurers were known to have explored the ruins of Castle Greyhawk and released Iuz.]

All that is known for sure is they bore the Crook of Rao while exploring a great, oddly convoluted tunnel, in the dungeons of Castle Greyhawk. They were instantly transported to a demi-plane created by Zagyg, home to a land known as the Isle of the Ape. After many adventures in the steaming jungles battling gargantuan apes, they despaired of ever returning to Oerth, and they employed a powerful item of magic known as an Amulet of Zagyg to return to the dungeons where they had left. An unfortunate and unanticipated side effect of this transport was that all of their magic and possessions were left behind.

[This tale is summarized in *Isle of the Ape* by Tenser.]

The Crook of Rao languished in this demi-plane for many years, before it was retrieved by agents of the Circle of Eight in preparation for an upcoming battle with Iggwilv, following the destruction of her daughter, Drelnza. The Circle feared the hordes of yugoloths and tanar'ri that Iggwilv had at her command, and sought the Crook of Rao to weaken her in the coming confrontation.

[The introduction of *Isle of the Ape* mentions the recent destruction of Iggwilv's daughter, a vampire warrior laying in stasis in the lost caverns of Tsojcanth<sup>4</sup> as the justification for Iggwilv's expected attack. This implies that agents of the Circle of Eight were responsible for her destruction.]

The agents who retrieved the Crook included Agath of Thurch, high priest of Celestian; Reynard Yargrove, Great Druidess of Obad-Hai in Keoland; Baron Franz Torkeep, Knight Banner of the Shield Lands and Follower of Heironeous; Rowena of the Silverbrow, Lady Marshal of the Vesve Forest; Warnes Starcoat, Arch-Mage of Urnst; and

Rakehell Chert, Thieves' Guildmaster of Scant. The group of six adventurers retrieved the Crook of Rao from the lair of Oonga, king of the gargantuan apes. They were nearly deceived by a trap laid by Iggwilv, and had to battle the arcanaloth Tu-oc-luc and his mezzoloth minions ere they returned to the Flanaess. It is believed that they managed to summon a type of aasimon known as a solar during the battle, allowing them to prevail.

[The adventurers named are the pregenerated characters detailed in *Isle of the Ape*<sup>1</sup>. The ending outlined is one of several possibilities given in the module. The arrival of the solar is accounted for in the powers of the relic detailed below.]

The Crook of Rao was apparently used by the Circle of Eight after its retrieval by the six adventurers in the confrontation with Iggwilv. Little is known about this battle, as much of it occurred on other planes, but the evil sorceress was eventually defeated, although not destroyed, at great cost by the Circle.

[This is pure speculation. No other sources detail this war.]

The Crook of Rao then passed from view for a time, until it resurfaced in the Great Kingdom following the Greyhawk Wars in the hands of the Lord Protector of Rel Astra, an animus known as Drax the Invulnerable. How he acquired it is unknown, but some speculate it was lost by an agent of the Circle of Eight seeking to relieve the forces of Commandant Osson of Almor before their destruction in Medegia.

[This is pure speculation. It seems likely that someone would have tried to rescue Commandant Osson. It's also unlikely that the Circle of Eight would have given the Crook of Rao to an animus of the Great Kingdom, and it resurfaces following the war. The hindrances detailed below might provide justification as to why Drax was so quick to rid himself of the relic.]

Drax offered the Crook of Rao in trade to Canon Hazen of Veluna in exchange for a pair of magical blades, and a few wands and staves which he felt would be more useful to the city's defense.

[This is according to the "Crook of Rao", "Tales of the Year of Peace".<sup>2</sup>]

A band of adventurers were employed to guard Patriarch Lemuel, Hazen's second-in-command, on the trip to Rel Astra. They were successful, despite numerous attacks by agents of Iuz, minions of the Overking, and the clergy of Hextor during the trip. Upon their arrival, Lemuel took the Crook of Rao in trade for the magic items promised. He then uttered a "word

of recall" and vanished.

[This is speculation based on the adventure outlined in Atlas of the Flanaess<sup>2</sup>.]

Lemuel never arrived in Mitrik, and the Crook of Rao is again lost. Some speculate treachery on the part of Drax, while others claim that Lemuel had already been replaced by an agent of Iuz. The truth may never be known, but unless the Crook of Rao is retrieved, the forces of good in the Flanaess may fall to the armies of evil.

[This is pure speculation designed to encourage further adventures searching for the Crook of Rao. If Canon Hazen ever retrieves the Crook, the relic will be effectively out of play for most campaigns set in the Post-Ashes setting.]

## Campaign Use

The Crook of Rao has appeared in one published module<sup>1</sup>, and one published adventure outline<sup>2</sup>. In the right time frame, it could be employed in either situation, with modifications to the history outlined above.

Alternatively, the Crook of Rao is now lost again. It would be of great use to Furyondy and Veluna, and of even more use to relieve the desperate straits Nyronnd finds itself in. Many adventures could be run as the PCs seek to locate and then recover the Crook of Rao. Did Drax ever really have the Crook? Did Lemuel turn traitor? Was Lemuel replaced by an agent of Iuz or the Overking? Did Iggwilv somehow warp the magic of his "word of recall"?

There is a strong suggestion in *Ivid the Undying*, in the section detailing the Spikerift cavern system of the Grandwood, that the Crook of Rao has been used as a component of a powerful ward constructed by priests of Hextor to imprison a rival priest of Nerull. If this rumor is true, and the Crook of Rao was used as part of the ward, the DM must determine how it got there, and the obstacles that need to be overcome to obtain it.

## Powers

The Crook of Rao is an extremely powerful relic. Although not as powerful in combat as some more common magical weapons, its powers can have a huge impact on a campaign, and it should be used with great caution.

The Crook of Rao is lawful good in alignment. It can be wielded without penalty by any priest or worshipper of Rao, or anyone of LG alignment. Anyone who is not of lawful good alignment will suffer the penalties and

drawbacks detailed below. In addition to these penalties, anyone of evil alignment will sustain 20 points of damage every time (or for every round) they deliberately touch any portion of the weapon. (This includes touching the Crook through clothing, such as gloves or metal gauntlets, but not through a container. It also does not include being struck by the Crook in combat).

In combat, the Crook of Rao serves as a *quarterstaff* +3. This magical bonus to hit and damage remains the same on any plane of existence.

The Crook of Rao has numerous other magical powers and effects as well.

Spell-like effects of the Crook function at the 18th level of magic use.

While wielding the Crook of Rao, a character may *dispel evil* at will, as the 5th priest spell of the same name. No material components are required, but extraplanar creatures to be dispelled must be hit by the Crook of Rao itself. Such creatures do suffer a penalty to hit the wielder of the Crook of Rao, as per the spell description.

Over the eons, the Crook of Rao has been used in particular to battle armies of Yugoloths. As a result, if the Crook of Rao is held forth in the name of good by any non-evil character, he may attempt to "turn" 2d6 yugoloths, as a priest of Rao of 18th level. (Use Table 47 in the DMG. There is no saving throw. Magic resistance and bonuses to saving throws do not apply. This power functions regardless of any magical protections which normally prevent turning of undead or banishment of fiends. Almost all known yugoloths have seven or more hit dice, save for least guardian yugoloths. If used against a yugoloth with six or less hit dice, it would be permanently destroyed, regardless of whether or not it was on its home plane. Also an additional 2d4 yugoloths would be affected, if of 5 HD or less.

The Crook of Rao serves as a channel for Rao's power in mortal realms. Hence any priest of Rao on the same plane or in the same crystal sphere as the Crook of Rao can pray for and receive spells of up to seventh level, even if Rao normally has no influence in that realm. (Normally a priest of Rao visiting the Forgotten Realms could not receive spells beyond second level. If he brought the Crook of Rao with him, however, he would have no such difficulties, even if he was on the other side of RealmSpace from the Crook. However if the Crook was then returned to Greyspace, any priest of Rao remaining behind would no longer be able to receive spells of third level and higher.)

The Crook of Rao has several additional powers in the hands of a priest of Rao in good standing.

While wielding the Crook of Rao, a priest of Rao can cast the second level priest spell *withdraw* at will.

Once per month, a priest of Rao can cast the fifth level priest spell *commune*.

While in contact with the Crook of Rao, a priest of Rao has an effective wisdom of his normal wisdom plus his level, to a maximum of 19. Extra bonus spells for this higher wisdom may be acquired normally if prayed for while in contact with the Crook. These bonus spells due to increased wisdom may be retained for up to 24 hours beyond a priest's last physical contact with the Crook.

While in physical contact with the Crook of Rao, a priest of Rao does not physically age. This protects him against magical aging effects as well such as the unwanted side effect of the third level wizard spell *haste* and the attack of a ghost. When not in contact with the Crook, a priest of Rao resumes aging normally.

In the hands of a priest of Rao of ninth level or higher, the Crook acts somewhat like a *ring of wizardry*, doubling the number of bonus spells received for high wisdom. (Combined with the increased wisdom detailed above, this can grant a large increase in the number of spells a priest of Rao can receive.)

In the hands of priest of Rao of fifteenth level or higher, the Crook can *summon* an aasimon once per twenty-four hour period. There is a 99% chance this will be a movanic deva of maximum hit points named Incarum. (Incarum may have additional powers as well, as the DM wishes.) The remaining 1% of the time it will be the solar Pelrao who appeared in the final battle on the Isle of the Ape. (Pelrao may have additional powers as well, as the DM wishes.)

[The name "Incarum" is taken from the lore of "Hopeful Dawn". The name "Pelrao" is fabricated from the name of the two gods he serves - Pelor and Rao.]

The Crook of Rao has several penalties associated with using it or owning it as well.

Any priest, ranger, or paladin cannot receive spells from other deities while within 100 yards of the Crook of Rao. Serving as a focus for the god of reason, the Crook overwhelms other deities influence in its area of effect.

Many evil artifacts, such as the *Hand* and *Eye of Vecna*, automatically shift a bearer's alignment to evil. The Crook of Rao has no direct effect on its bearer's alignment. However, in any situation, the course of action most true to the lawful good alignment and the belief's of Rao will occur to the bearer. Over time, this is likely to shift its bearer's

alignment to lawful good, unless they are a divine minion of some other creed, as adjudicated by the DM. This may be why the animus Drax was so willing to rid himself of the Crook.

As Rao is a god of reason, a bearer of the Crook of Rao will find himself more and more prone to contemplation and slower and slower to take direct action. This will manifest itself in a variety of ways. In particular, for every year the Crook of Rao is borne by a character (in frequent physical contact with the Crook), the character will suffer a -1 penalty to initiative, to a maximum penalty of -5, except when battling fiends and the avatars of evil deities. After the first such year, *haste* spells will no longer have any effect on the character, even if he later gives up the Crook.

Finally, as Rao influences the Prime Material Plane primarily through numerous relics he has placed there, his attention is particularly focused on any bearer of such a relic, particularly the Crook of Rao. As a result, anyone bearing the Crook of Rao will find himself held to a near-divine standard of purity and perfection. This standard is nearly impossible to meet by a mortal, and as a result frequent quests of atonement are likely to be required by Rao. The strain of meeting such a standard will eventually force a wielder of the Crook to pass it on to another being they feel is more worthy, as instructed by the deity. The timing will, of course, be affected by need and circumstance. For example, the bearer of the Crook will not give it up while combating a horde of yugoloths summoned by Iggwilv, unless there is a more appropriate follower of Rao available to wield the stave in their stead.

## Suggested Means of Destruction

\* The Crook must be buried in the Cauldron of Night. The Cauldron of Night is located on Asperd Isle in the domain of the Sea Barons, beneath Tar Hill. It was from this mass that the great chunk of crystal from which the Malachite Throne was crafted was taken .

\* The Crook must be fed to Kezef the Chaos Hound. Kezef was recently loosed by the god Cyric of the Realms during the events detailed in the novel "Prince of Lies". The ravening beast now roams the Grey Wastes hunting Mask, Patron of Thieves.

## References

- [1] *WG6: Isle of the Ape* module
- [2] *From the Ashes* boxed set, "Atlas of the Flanaess"
- [3] *Dungeon #41*, "Hopeful Dawn"
- [4] *S4: Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth* module
- [5] *Ivid the Undying* supplement (published on AOL by TSR)

## THE GOOD OERTH

(Exploring Beyond the Flanaess)

## OERTH FROM THE GROUND UP

by Roger E. Moore (TSR Roger@aol.com)

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Certainly, just about everyone who plays in and enjoys the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® setting also wonders what the rest of the world of Oerth looks like beyond the Flanaess. There is, of course, the small map showing most of the continent of Oerik, present in the 1980 WORLD OF GREYHAWK gazetteer and 1983 WORLD OF GREYHAWK boxed set (on page 18 in the *Glossography* of the latter). But few other official TSR-published materials are available on the shape of the rest of the world.

Apparently, not even the original designer of the GREYHAWK® setting or his allied Dungeon Masters ever mapped the whole world out in any detail. Frank Mentzer (ExTSR@aol.com) posted a note on in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK folder (dated 2/24/95, 17:48:42, "Re:Re:Map of Oerth"), stating, "Sorry, only 2 semi-complete maps of Oerth exist – mine and Gary's ... And for that matter, neither of us has a *really* complete map ... On the other hand, Oerth is what you make it. So ignore us and complete it on your own". In short, we're on our own.

However, we're *not* unarmed with clues. What can we figure out about the rest of Oerth from official sources – using the Oerik map, for instance? Quite a lot, if we make certain necessary assumptions and accept that each DM is going to create a unique version of Oerth to suit his or her own campaign style. Brace yourself for some math work, too -- and please check my figures. If you find an error, you can embarrass me with it later! (I've had to correct this article twice already. Don't ask.)

### Oerik & Oerth Observed

As noted in the 1983 boxed set and other places, Oerth has a polar circumference of 25,200 miles. We will assume Oerth's equatorial circumference is the same (or so close to it that it doesn't matter -- given the nicely timed orbits of Celene and Luna, the gods of Oerth seem to go for a certain amount of perfection). The little map of Oerik shows its geographical features from the equator up to 60 degrees latitude, equal to 4,200 miles north of the equator. I got out a

ruler and measured the equatorial distance shown, did the same for the 4,200-mile distance north, and used proportions to find that the east-west distance shown along the equator is about 6,320 miles. Now, this is almost exactly 25% of 25,200 miles (6,300 miles); I could easily be off by 20 miles, so we can make it 6,300 miles even, a full 90 degrees of longitude. Thus, the Oerik map shows roughly one-quarter of the northern hemisphere of Oerth, excluding all lands from 60 degrees latitude north to the pole. This is less than *one-eighth* the total surface area of Oerth. As vast as this mapped region is, it isn't much!

The total surface area of Oerth, by the way, can be found if we assume Oerth is a perfect sphere. With a circumference of 25,200 miles, the diameter is 25,200 divided by pi (3.14159265 ...), which is about 8,021.41 miles (radius = 4,010.7 miles), and the total surface area of its lands and seas equals pi times the diameter squared, or about 202,139,540 square miles. The total area of the Oerik North Quadrant, which is the area of the Oerik map plus the rest of the region north to the pole, is one-eighth the above, or about 25,267,440 square miles. Earth's total surface area, land and sea, is 196,949,970 square miles; Oerth is larger than our world, as Earth (which is an oblate spheroid, not a perfect sphere) has a mean diameter of about 7,917.78 miles. These figures are important, as will be shown later.

There is a problem we face in using this Oerik map, however. Because the Oerik map is a two-dimensional projection map showing features from a globe, some distortion exists when east-west distances are measured away from the equator, with such distortions increasing the farther north or south one goes. (In other words, the Oerik map is not a Lambert azimuthal equal-area projection map, for you hard-core cartographers.) How much distortion is involved? Well, the map shows a distance of 6,300 miles east-west at the equator, but at the 30 degree north latitude mark, the total east-west distance on the Oerik map is about 5,456 miles, and at 60 degrees north latitude, the total east-west distance is 3,150 miles -- exactly half the east-west distance at the equator! A more accurate map of Oerik would squeeze the northernmost features more closely together than we would expect from the Oerik map and even the colorful two-part Flanaess maps. This produces some important problems; for instance, the Thillonrian peninsula is not as long as we think it is, and the Dramidj Ocean is more narrow than it looks. Travel times should take only *half* what they seem, going east or west at the 60 degree latitude mark!

An Important Pause: Some DMs might be screaming already as they read this. Am I saying that all the maps of the Flanaess are actually inaccurate? Yes, I am. If your group is playing north of the 45 degree north latitude line, the east-west distances are way, way off. They are rather off even when you are playing at the latitude of the City of Greyhawk. Erk!

What should GREYHAWK campaign DMs do about this? Nothing for now. Just keep on playing along. Assume that it takes longer to travel east-west as you go farther north because of cold weather, bad roads, a curse from Fhlarlanghn, or whatever. Just forget about it for now, really. Faerun on the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign world probably has the very same problem. Don't sweat it. We'll probably get a Lambert azimuthal equal-area projection map done for Oerik first, and then we can laugh about it. At any rate, the map error, as serious as it is (and it *is* serious) hasn't hampered any campaigns that I know of.

Let's move on. How much area is actually shown in the little Oerik map? The temptation is to multiply 6,300 miles east-west by 4,200 miles north-south and get 26,460,000 square miles, which works for any rectangular area -- but we've already pointed out that we can't do this because of map distortion. The Oerik map's total area would equal that of the Oerik North Quadrant minus the area north of the 60 degree latitude line. Thanks to the wonderful Gary Holian (PSmedger@aol.com, whose article on this topic will appear in the next issue of the Oerth Journal), we have the formula for measuring the area north of the 60 degree latitude line, and I reproduce it below:

$$\text{Polar Area} = 2 * \pi * [(\sin 90 \text{ degrees}) - (\sin 60 \text{ degrees})] * (\text{radius of Oerth, squared})$$

which equals  $2 * \pi * (.13397) * (16,085,714.49) =$  about 13,540,283 square miles of Arctic wasteland and sea. This figure might be of interest to anyone writing about the Land of Black Ice and its blue bugbears. Interestingly, the 1983 boxed set's description of the Land of Black Ice includes some rumors that sound suspiciously like an opening exists at the north pole leading into a Pellucidar-like hollow world, like the HOLLOW WORLD™ setting of the MYSTARA® campaign. Just read the section on the Land of Black Ice in the Guide booklet, page 60. (Why are Edgar Rice Burroughs' Pellucidar novels listed as "inspirational and educational reading" in Appendix N of the AD&D 1st Edition DMG? Hmm.) But we are getting off the topic.

The northern hemisphere of Oerth covers about 101,069,770 square miles, and if we subtract off the Arctic region and divide the remainder by 4, we have the area shown on the Oerik map. (We divide by 4 because the region is part of a quadrant.) The Oerik map (from the equator to the 60 degree north latitude line) thus covers about 21,882,372 square miles.

How large is Oerik itself? I further guess that, correcting for map distortion, about three-fourths of the Oerik map is land -- mostly Oerik, of course, with Hepmonaland and the chunk of arctic land to the northwest making up all the rest except for the islands. How much

farther Oerik extends to the south and west is anyone's guess, but the visible portion is about 16,411,779 square miles in size. (Thank you, Gary Holian!)

### Continental Questions

The largest land mass on Earth is the Eurasian continent (including Europe, Asia Minor, the Arabian peninsula, all areas once part of the Soviet Union, all Mediterranean islands, Iceland, Indonesia, Japan, etc.), which covers about 21,196,000 square miles. The total land area of Earth is 58,433,000 square miles, so Eurasia covers about 36% of that total. We can't get an accurate idea of how much land area Oerik covers, but "the Oerik continent is the major center of the world" (*Guide*, page 4), so we'll assume it is the largest Oerth continent there is. There could be plenty of land to the west and south to rival or exceed Eurasia.

What about the other continents? In the 1983 boxed set's *Guide*, page 4, it is said that Oerth has "four great continents and countless islands, and four great oceans and countless seas which surround these bodies of land. Little is known about the lands of the western portion of Oerik, less still about the savage inhabitants of the other continents ..." This passage tells us clearly that learned people of the Flanaess have discovered the nature of their world and something of its appearance. Did they use divination spells or *wishes*? Did they question the gods directly or indirectly? Were they spelljamming? Did someone *teleport* to a moon of Oerth and look back with a telescope? All of these are clear possibilities, and it is likely that all of them are true. (Nothing makes a fact a fact like independent confirmation.) We shall accept the brief description of Oerth as true and apply it to what we've figured out so far.

To figure out something about the size of the other continents, we have to guess at how much of Oerth's surface is land. On earth, the land-to-sea ratio is about 3 to 7. On Oerth, this ratio could probably be adjusted to give a DM big continents or little ones. How far can it be adjusted? Let's look at a table of Earth's continents:

continent	area in square miles
Eurasia*	21,196,000
Africa	11,707,000
North America	9,360,000
South America	6,883,000
Antarctica	6,000,000
Australia**	2,966,150

\* This includes (again) Europe, Asia Minor, the Arabian peninsula, all areas once part of the Soviet Union, all Mediterranean islands, Iceland, Indonesia, Japan, and other

small islands nearby, like Taiwan.

\*\* This excludes all islands in Oceania.

By comparison, the largest island in the world, Greenland (a.k.a. Kalaallit Nunaat, in Inuit), covers about 840,000 square miles. The next largest island, New Guinea, covers a bit over 316,600 square miles. The continents of Oerth are described as "great", so we figure they must be at least the size of South America. How much bigger or smaller? We have to decide on how much of Oerth's surface is covered by land.

land %	surface area of Oerth covered
10%	20,214,000 square miles
20%	40,428,000 square miles
30%	60,642,000 square miles
40%	80,856,000 square miles

Well, we can't pick 10%, because there's almost no land left over from Oerik to make anything but islands. At 20%, assuming that Oerik is the size of Eurasia, we have about enough land left over to make three continents that, if they were of equal size, would each be about as big as South America. At 30%, we have enough land left over after Oerik's done to make three monstrous continents, each larger than North America and Australia combined. At 40%, each of the other three continents is about the size of Eurasia! This is, of course, because Oerth has so much more surface area than our own world, even though its diameter doesn't seem *that* much larger. (It's also because Oerth has four continents, while Earth has six.)

And now, the famous question:

Is Hepmonaland a Continent?

I say yes, it probably is. Look at the Oerik map, at the chunk of northwestern Hepmonaland we can see. The east-west distortion at 15 degrees north latitude is not very great, so we can get away with estimating its area by creating a roughly equivalent-sized rectangle and multiplying the base by the height. When I did this, I came up with a figure of just over 700,000 square miles. This is nearly the size of Greenland, and Hepmonaland's coastlines clearly appear to be spreading out, implying much more land lies to the southeast. Northwestern Hepmonaland is shown on the Oerik map to be covered by a single (tropical rain) forest, but lands farther to the southeast could include savanna, mountains, and everything else Oerik has. If you are one of those 30% or 40% land-area DMs, then there's one darn big continent down there.

By the way, the continent's *real* name (i.e., the one its civilized inhabitants call it) is unlikely to be

Hepmonaland; Hepmonaland is just what Oerikians (Oerikers? Oerikeans?) call the jungle part, probably named after a being named Hepmona, who discovered it or once conquered it. It would be like a visitor calling North America "Florida" because all he saw of our continent was Miami. Given the presence of Olman (quasi-Central American) peoples in the Amedio and the absence of quasi-African, sub-Saharan cultures in the Flanaess, the Hepmonaland continent sounds like a good place for a mix of both, plus whatever else the DM wishes to toss in the pot.

Indeed, one writer for DRAGON® Magazine, David Howery, used Hepmonaland for his African GREYHAWK settings; see DRAGON issue #189, page 10+, "The Dark Continent", which includes a color map that might have been his version of the unseen part of Hepmonaland. In addition, wall paintings in the dungeons of AD&D module C1 *The Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan* clearly imply that the Olman people migrated over land and sea to the Amedio Jungle from another area, where their old empire was at war with black-skinned humans. (Yes, I suppose the latter could have been drow, but let's not go into that for now.) Did the Olman people originally come from Hepmonaland? It seems possible.

I have heard about Aquaria, the continent that's supposed to lie to the east of Oerik across the Solnor Ocean, but I know next to nothing about it. Aquaria, if it lies about 3,000 miles or so east of Oerik (the Solnor Ocean is said to be at least 1,000 leagues across), lies just north or northeast of Hepmonaland.

If you accept Hepmonaland as a continent and buy off on Aquaria as one, too (or if you have your own replacement for Aquaria to the east), then where's Continent #4? It might be polar, either at the north or south poles; the Oerik map does show a chunk of unconnected land to the northwest above the 45 degree latitude mark. (Antarctica lies entirely south of the 60 degree south latitude line, for instance, and Alaska, Greenland, and much of Scandinavia are above the 60 degree north latitude line on our world.) If a polar continent sounds too boring, with nothing but ice and snow to play with, then Oerth probably has seasonal polar caps like our Arctic icecap (900,000 square miles, island-sized), and the extra continent is far to the west or southwest of Oerik. (Personally, I'm inclined to fill this last continent with dinosaurs or early Cenozoic mammals, maybe with an Egyptian or Atlantean civilization, just for variety's sake.)

Now, keep in mind that there have to be four huge oceans. The Solnor Ocean is one, and the huge ocean of which the Densac Gulf is the northernmost part is likely another. The ocean to the west of Oerik is a third. These are going to be *huge* oceans, at least one of them larger than the Pacific! If you are mapping things out this far, be sure to add

plenty of islands. You might have many areas similar to the lands of Ursula K. LeGuin's Earthsea trilogy when you're done, with the bad effects of hurricanes and sea waves undone by artifacts, local protective gods, weather magic, etc.

### Matters of Longitude

An interesting point comes up when trying to write down map coordinates for places on Oerth: Where is the zero-degree longitude line? On Earth, it is arbitrarily set at Greenwich, England, the site of the Royal Greenwich Observatory. On Oerth, where else could it be but the City of Greyhawk, the Jewel of the Flanaess? So be it! The world will be mapped from Greyhawk, and we assume that most of the central Flanaess uses this system of cartography.

It is unlikely, of course, that this was always so. Just as every city keeps its own time, so is it likely that some major cities, particularly the capitals of empires, were once the "zero points" for longitude lines. "Official" maps from Aerdy, the Great Kingdom, are certain to show Rauxes as the "zero point". (Anything different calls for a trip to the torture chambers.) Ancient maps from the Suloise Empire or the Baklunish lands are likely to have their own "zero points", all of which leads to a certain amount of confusion on the part of cartographers and lost adventurers. The Scarlet Brotherhood might have adopted the old standard from the Suloise Empire and use the presumed location of the Suel capital (a.k.a. the Forgotten City) as its "zero point".

Another possibility appears here. If you accept the Scarlet Brotherhood's worship of Tharizdun, they might measure all points in a radial fashion from the so-called Forgotten Temple of Tharizdun, in hex F5-88 (assuming they know of its existence from the few guardians and worshippers there). Radial coordinates, instead of using latitude and longitude lines, measure the direct distance from the "zero point" to a given spot, plus the angle at which the above line lies with respect to a line drawn from the "zero point" straight north. Thus, the Scarlet Brotherhood's cartographers would say that a certain hill that lies 10 miles due east of the Forgotten Temple of Tharizdun is at coordinate point 10/90: 10 miles, 90 degrees. A cavern 106 miles southeast of the temple would be at point 106/135, and so on. The radial system is sure to confuse all player-character types except possibly wizards and priests who took trigonometry; grids are much easier to use.

It's also worth a thought that one extremely vital point in an enemy government would be its cartographic division. If a group of commando-type characters was able to destroy an enemy nation's maps, mapmaking equipment, and cartography staff, the enemy would be dealt a critical blow for decades to come. This is especially true for naval powers,

who probably guard their map rooms more heavily than their treasure vaults. Think about it.

### It's About Time

If you assume that most timekeeping on Oerth is done by means of sundials (which can be extremely clever and sophisticated, by the way -- look them up in a good encyclopedia), then you can also figure that no two cities will have the same daily time shown at any moment unless they lie on the exact same longitude line. For every 5 degrees of longitude eastward of a given base point (equal to 350 miles, at 70 miles per degree of longitude), a sundial will record the time as 20 minutes later in the day; for every 5 degrees westward, the time will be 20 minutes earlier in the day. (We are, of course, assuming that Oerth rotates as our Earth does, counterclockwise when viewed from its north pole, so that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west.) A full 15 degrees of longitude makes an hour's difference, and so forth. When it is sundown in Hepmonaland, it is full daylight over the Sea of Dust. Keep this in mind when your characters go teleporting over great distances.

The Flanaess is not sophisticated or organized enough to have developed time zones as we have, so each city keeps its own time. (As the supremely relativistic priests of Cyndor like to say, "The correct time is wherever you happen to be".) Minor magical enhancements can have a sundial register even on cloudy days, or (in extreme cases) underground. Other details on local timekeeping, such as sunrise and sunset times, may be found in the *Glossography* from the 1983 boxed set, on pages 18-20.

The clerics of Flanaess deities concerned with time, such as Cyndor, Istus, or Lendor, are likely to have some importance in major cities as official timekeepers. They would know what time it was at any spot on Oerth, given a brief glance at a map or a moment of meditation, and might themselves have perfect internal senses of time. In places where the timing of ceremonies, spells, military actions, and so forth are of great importance, these priests are sure to be gainfully employed with merchant houses, the government, wizards' guilds, the military, etc.

### A Last (Tilted) Point

The axial tilt of Oerth as it rotates in the center of Greyspace is 30 degrees exactly, as opposed to our Earth's 23 degrees 27 minutes. As noted in the 1983 *Glossography*, page 20, the 60 degree north latitude line is Oerth's "arctic circle", north of which you get the phenomenon of the midnight sun. (The same thing happens, of course, south of the 60 degree south latitude line.) As a result of this increased tilt, Oerth should actually have more severe seasonal changes in climate than Earth does. Gods and magic

can alter this, of course, but somewhere on Oerth it might get very hot in the summer and very cold in the winter.

Other interesting points can be deduced from this axial tilt, but those can wait for a future article. I've wandered off the topic of continents and mapping Oerth, anyway.

Cheers!

## HOW CAN I GET STUFF IN HERE?

The Council of Greyhawk accepts freelance submissions from anyone interested. If you have something you wish to submit, or would like to discuss an idea for an article, send e-mail to "Iquander@aol.com". All submissions are reviewed by a small editorial board and checked for clarity, grammar and consistency. We will work with all submissions, but reserve the right to reject a piece if it does not conform to the aforementioned standards. We are always interested in in-depth examinations of the nations of the Flanaess and their history, as well as adventures, NPC outlines, artifact and magical item descriptions, and just about anything else related to Greyhawk. Regular features include "Dyvers, City of Adventure", which details guilds, individuals, locations and organizations of the City of Sails, "With Boccob's Blessing", a regular in-depth look at a magic item or artifact unique to the World of Greyhawk, "Gateway to Adventure", World of Greyhawk-based adventure modules and "The Good Oerth", detailed explorations into "off the map" areas of Oerik and beyond.

## WHAT IS THE COUNCIL OF GREYHAWK?

The Council is a loosely organized group of Greyhawk enthusiasts who currently meet and operate primarily on America Online. Regular meetings are open to all interested, though the actual "staff" of the magazine consists of those who have contributed to the Oerth Journal within the last three issues. Check the World of Greyhawk folder in the TSR Worlds area of TSR Online on AOL for meeting times and details.

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