

The Best of Greyhawk Presents

Best of Greyhawk #1

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Originally posted on the AOL/TSR Greyhawk Message Board, folder #1.

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Notes from Roger Moore

Subj: A Note from Roger Moore Pt 1

95-02-21 13:58:03 EST

From: TSR Inc

I had an interesting time last weekend looking over the messages on this topic. (Thank you for the welcome, Tamerlain.) I came up with a few comments to add to the topic of continuing GREYHAWK(R) campaigns.

One consistent complaint here about running Oerth campaigns is that a guiding vision is needed in structuring adventures and background material. I think that *any* DM can reconstruct parts of that vision by sitting down with whatever modules and accessories are deemed acceptable for that campaign (no matter who wrote them), getting out a notepad and a pencil, and writing down all the elements that these products have in common, including the things these modules imply about the world at large.

For example, look at the early AD&D(R) modules for the GREYHAWK setting. (Forgive me for the capitals and trademarking in my posts, but 12 years of working with the Legal department have convinced me that life is best served by doing the Correct Thing.) Anyway, take a moment and think about what the following adventures have in common: A1-4 Slavers modules, GDQ Giants-Drow-Abyss series, T1-4 Temple of Elemental Evil, EX1-2 Dungeonland modules, S1-4 Realms of Terror modules, WG4-6 Tharizdun/Mordenkainen/Ape modules.

Time's up. Here's my list:

1. They're all about dungeons--sneaking through underground complexes and beating up evil monsters and taking their valuables. That sounds pretty self-evident, but it is also a rather important distinction when you look at how proactive the adventurers of Oerth are apparently supposed to be (or how fast they deliver retribution). These adventures take place in reaction to the maneuvers of evil forces, and the PCs merely carry the fight directly home to the bad guys. You can think of the early GREYHAWK adventures as commando raids: sudden, violent, destructive, and decisively solving large problems in quick order. You don't worry about merchandising, diplomacy, or anything else that involves talking your way through things. You swing your sword and the problem is gone.

2. Each of these adventures epitomizes the philosophy that "nothing is as it seems." The PCs start out facing a certain localized threat that turns out to be a part of a broader regional threat, which is in turn a part of an even greater threat to the whole world, and so on. The GDQ series demonstrates this extremely well, but the same pattern is followed in A1-4 and T1-4, with lesser echoes in other modules. It's like peeling an onion. Each layer of adventure and mystery, when peeled off, reveals a new and unsuspected layer beneath it. Every puppet has a master, and that master has a greater master. You never know when the last grand plot or last master has been found. Great, world-threatening plots are spun out in small ways, supported by small people who support greater ones, and so on. The small evil people cannot see or comprehend the great scheme of which they are only a part. They get their cut, then go home. Questioning a flunky gains the heroes little except, perhaps, the name of someone a little higher in the evil hierarchy. (And only one or two top people in a particular area know who their commander is on the next level of the hierarchy.) Low-level heroes start out in the same way; they aren't able to fully comprehend the danger because they don't have all the information. Knowledge is gained painfully, step by step, in all old GREYHAWK modules. Behind all great GREYHAWK schemes, however, is a great villain--perhaps two or more acting in concert, but often just one with plenty of helpers and aides. Even the most chaotic events often have a logical structure to them, a deliberate and purposeful motion toward an unseen but surely unwelcome end. Note that no GREYHAWK villains (that I've heard of) ever come right out and say, "I'm taking over the world." The villain instead *acts* to take over the world, not bothering to broadcast the news verbally; talk is cheap, and time is precious. (I recall the dialog in the first <Superman> movie between Superman and Lex Luthor: "Is that how you get your kicks, Luthor? By planning the deaths of millions of innocent people?" "No--by *causing* the deaths of millions of innocent people.")

3. Secrets are paramount in Oerth. (It's no accident that Vecna, in <Vecna Lives>, is so closely tied to secrecy and plots.) Mystery is everywhere. The unexpected is all you can expect. Heroes must put together the pieces of the puzzle, the activities that they see happening, to gain insight into the master villain's motives. It would be very un-Greyhawkish for a villain to make his full intentions clear. There are too many meddling gods, demigods, and heroes around who would love to see a bad guy telegraph his next moves. ("Say, Tyranna!" "Yes, Great Heironeous?" "That Iuz just said he was going to attack in the west! Be a good underling and organize an army and put a stop to it." "At once, Your Deityship!") Instead, as noted above, little things are done that add up to bigger things, which in turn make

bigger ones. A few kidnappings, done in many places widely scattered, add up to a large slaver ring. An uprising of hill giants on Oerth is just a part of a massive series of conflicts on many worlds (as per Q1), part of Lolth's attempts to conquer the known multiverse.

4. Many of the early modules show a preoccupation with what I call "pocket universes." Oerth is obviously a world crawling with gates to other planes, worlds, dimensions, times, etc. Look at the modules: G-series modules are linked by teleporters; Q1 has many, many gates; the Isle of the Ape is a pocket universe, as are the places in the EX series and S4. Obviously, having your own pocket universe is quite a status symbol in the Flanaess among the High and Mighty, and well it should be if Oerth is actually a uniquely potent nexus world for entering and exiting numerous other planes and settings. Interestingly, some of the plots in the early GREYHAWK adventures revolve around other-universe invasions, Lolth being the prime example. The AD&D 1st Edition DMG gives game mechanics for converting PCs to TSR's early Wild West and science-fantasy games. Some of the quasi deities described in DRAGON(R) issue #71 are universe-crossers. (Indeed, one of them, Murlynd, is a "magitech" genre-crosser, as his home in EX1 makes abundantly clear.)

5. The early adventures, though having devious traps, creatively vile monsters, and unexpected discoveries about Who Is Really In Charge, are also very straightforward and often unadorned. They are very practical, action-packed dungeon crawls with less-developed background stories that one often sees in typical DUNGEON(R) Adventures modules. Villains are often sketched in with little personality detail except their battle tactics. This in no way discredits the early modules, because I played in many of them and loved them dearly. The thrust is pretty direct, however. Things are clearly in black and white, good and evil. You know who and where the bad guys are, and you go kill them and take their treasures because they are bad and don't deserve to be rich. YOU are the hero and YOU deserve to be rich. One must admit this is a very appealing and powerful theme; it sure worked for me and my groups in the late 1970s. Life was simpler then, eh?

6. Magical devices from Oerth, though sometimes clever and appealing, are pretty unadorned themselves. Rare is the long sword +3 that has any history or personality worth mentioning; magical devices, except for the most powerful ones, are regarded as tools and nothing more--very, very, very nice tools, perhaps, but they exist only to get a job done.

7. Evil is on the rise on Oerth. I disagree with some in this forum who say that <From the Ashes> was a radical departure from earlier material. A constant theme hammered home in almost every early GREYHAWK module is that very powerful entities are extremely interested in conquering and ruining the world. Assaults by evil forces are not at all unusual; they are, in fact, constant and extreme. <GREYHAWK Wars> and <From the Ashes> bring the trend to the surface, giving the triumph to evil over a large part of the Flanaess. (See what happens when you don't stop the Bad Guys?) The days of Good are numbered unless good folks get their act together, pronto. Side note: I assume the evil forces want Oerth so badly because it has so many gates; from Oerth, you can see forever. And as for St. Cuthbert the Apparently Absent, perhaps there's a story there that you aren't aware of (but one you can make up without trouble). Maybe Iuz worked out a plan to keep St. Cuthbert out of the action for a while--bottled up his avatar, kidnapped his highest priests, diverted his attention by staging extraplanar attacks on his home or other holdings, stole his favorite mace--hey! Isn't the Mace of St. Cuthbert off in another universe, according to that module in DRAGON issue #100? No wonder he's not getting anything accomplished! Perhaps someone should go get it back.... BluSponge mentioned the title, "Greyhawk: Renaissance," and I like that. However, if I was the DM of a GREYHAWK campaign, I'd put the burden of bringing about the Renaissance on the PCs. Carl Sargent created a world in trouble--it's down, but not out (the Dark Ages, as QSamantha accurately put it). If there is any light, the PCs must shed it, and fast.

8. Forces of evil in GREYHAWK modules are usually made up of very tough, highly organized, above-average nonhuman troops: derro, drow, hobgoblins, giants, etc. These forces often use unusual tactics, attack routines, weapons, armor, and magic--all stuff that most adventurers will not have encountered before, stuff against which the heroes will be hard-pressed to defend themselves. The monsters are described in rather spare terms; there's not a lot of material on their religious life, cultural activities, architectural preferences, etc. You get just enough information to get a quick and usually accurate impression of them before you kill them, loot the bodies, and move on.

I had a few other points, but I'll save them for later posts. Dungeons, proactive scouting or retaliatory raids, progressive layers of mystery revealed in sequence, secret plots and goals, universe and genre crossings, straightforward set-ups, uncomplicated magical items, constant assaults by evil forces led by supervillains with

hierarchies of followers, skillful nonhuman evil troops: these are common elements in "old-style" GREYHAWK adventures. Some points may sound simple, but "simple" can be very refreshing if people feel campaigns have become overburdened with detail they didn't need.

Once you have the background concepts clear, building adventures is easier. ("Let's see, I'll have Baba Yaga as the main villain, with a bunch of greenhag servants from a swamp...") I do recommend that a broader picture of the conflicts operating in and around the Flanaess be developed by every DM; much of the world seemed to be operating in a vacuum until <From the Ashes> offered a coherent vision of the Bigger Picture, a vision that easily spawns a thousand adventures a day. Still, if you don't accept Carl's vision, you should construct your own, drawing up the quiet but fierce struggles going on between the gods for control of Oerth, then working downward to their followers and priests and armies and subject nations. ("As above, so below" goes the saying.)

I'm still reading and rereading all the messages on this board. (You'd think I would use the time for more productive work.) Anyway, I showed some of the material here to Skip Williams, whose characters were among the earliest explorers of Castle Greyhawk. (I was not one of the original Castle Greyhawk group.) Skip got in there about 20 years ago, I think. I've encouraged him to chat a bit on this board; he had some interesting comments on Tenser the Mage, in particular. I will also pass along any questions you wish to direct to Anne Brown, who works two cubes away from mine and is in my product group, or Jim Ward, who has an office downstairs in Executive Land and is my boss's boss, the Vice President of Creative Services. Colin, by the way, is one cube away from me. As Oedipus would have said, we're a very close family.

I am working on a checklist of things that can be covered when developing a fantasy kingdom. It might be of use to those of you developing your own GREYHAWK(R) campaigns, and I'll post it later. This reminds me a lot of some things done in the SF column in POLYHEDRON(R) Newszine, "The Living Galaxy," only with a fantasy twist. I cover a lot of "orphan" SF campaigns there.

ZorroBlade (96-01-26) commented about the Underdark being hijacked to the Realms. There's no reason both worlds can't have titanic underground cavern systems. I think it's important to make the character of each underground realm different, however. The Vault of the Drow under Oerth is not really like Menzoberranzan under the Realms. The Vault has an agricultural, feudal-city look, while "Menzo" (as people around here call it) reminds me of a bizarre downtown area.

On a related point, I worked with Carl Sargent on the design concepts for <Night Below: The Underdark Campaign> a year and a half ago, and we agreed that we wanted the set (which is made to be a generic adventure, applicable to almost any game world) to be especially easy to fit into the Realms and the Flanaess, as both are all-encompassing "basic high fantasy" worlds. We also agreed that it was wrong to duplicate the old D1-3 Drow series of modules; Carl needed to present new realms, new monsters, new challenges, new evil plots, and so on. And that he did, brilliantly (I certainly thought so, having read some of the resulting work). Without giving away too much, I will say that I had always wondered about one big, wet spot marked off in the upper right corner of the D1-3 "big picture" underground maps. (You DMs know what I'm talking about.) Funny thing, Carl had always wondered about that spot, too. So, if you want to expand your GREYHAWK(R) campaign in one humongous, horrible, nightmarish, character-killing shot, get <Night Below>. End of advertisement. Ian Mackie (95-01-28), you were more correct than you knew!

QSamantha (95-02-13) wanted to know when the events of <Vecna Lives!> took place. First of all, QSamantha, I have to thank you, because the module was my idea (though Zeb Cook got to write it). I came up with the title and a vague idea of the contents (Vecna returns to the Flanaess) during a designer meeting in the games library here, because 10 years ago I had a miniature figure of a lich that I'd painted up in fluorescent colors which I then photographed against a Blue Oyster Cult album cover so it looked like Vecna was taking command of Outer Planes Central Station. That's how things get started around here--goofing off. Zeb took the idea and did wonderfully horrible things with it. I was a very proud stepfather.

Anyway, to answer your question, I have it in mind that the module takes place just before the events in <GREYHAWK Wars>. In fact, Ed Greenwood and I were talking a few years ago about the "Wizards Three" articles he was writing for DRAGON Magazine, and I asked him to have Mordenkainen make mention of the struggle with Vecna in issue #188. In the next "Wizards Three" interview, in #196, Mordenkainen mentions the ongoing wars of Iuz. Given this and the publishing dates of the two products (<Vecna Lives> came first), I'd use that sort of chronology. Note that there's no reason that the Circle of Eight could not have had clones waiting in case of their demise, so killing them off isn't really an unspeakable disaster--it's only a major disaster. Mordenkainen alludes to this in issue #188, and the same is referenced in <Rary the Traitor> (only those clones didn't survive).

Martial Arts in the Flanaess: Why not? Western society has unarmed combat traditions of wrestling, boxing, etc. (DRAGON Magazine has had lots of articles on this topic.) And who is to say that an oppressed, unarmed peasantry can't develop martial combat techniques against marauding troops of conquering overlords? It sure worked for Okinawa, and Gary Gygax's many articles on polearms have pointed out that some weapons (like the bill hook)

were developed from agricultural tools by European peasants who wished to trim down armored knights. Adding in hand and foot attacks is perfectly reasonable, too. Think about Roman cesti or brass knuckles. Look at savate, or the way that karate and dozens of other Eastern martial arts have been adopted into Western culture. How many martial-arts storefronts are in your neighborhood? Commoners might go for unarmed fighting more than the aristocrats, who would spit upon any suggestion that they take off their armor and drop their two-handed swords. I could see certain unarmed or minimally armed martial traditions appearing among hard-pressed populations (in the lands of Iuz, for instance) and becoming fully accepted and widely if illegally taught by wandering masters; the traditions would also become associated in the minds of others with the specific national or ethnic groups that developed them, the way we think of the French when we hear "savate."

I'm mulling over some of the comments here about aiming GREYHAWK campaigns at mature gamers. This begs for further definition. What is a mature gamer? What elements are critical to a mature-gamer campaign? If we were to discuss this for any length of time, it might become apparent that few people agree on what a mature-gamer campaign should include. In other words, be careful what you ask for--you might not be clearly understood.

And I never said that modules from DUNGEON(R) Adventures were not appropriate to GREYHAWK campaigns. Every DM and player has different gaming styles, and *many* modules in that setting would work perfectly well in the Flanaess. (I mean, if you can have Alice in Wonderland in Castle Greyhawk, you can have almost anything!) It's a topic for another time; I have to get back to work. Cheers!

Hi, there. Sorry I haven't posted in a few days. I can find time to post only twice or three times a week, as I'm doing this out of TSR and things have been very busy for me lately. To post, I ask Rob for a printout of everything everyone's said, then spend a night reading it all through, then write up a response. Yesterday evening Rob gave me the (huge) printout on everything since he put in my last note on the index, so my response thus won't include replies to anything anyone's said since 5:36 PM EST, 2/28/95. I guess I should get my own account. I apologize, too, for the size of my postings, but there is so much to say.

Some people here like Berteau (95-02-24) are frustrated that there is not more official TSR material published about Oerth, or even about Oerik, the main continent of which the Flanaess is just the easternmost part. I've felt pretty frustrated about that, too, and I *work* at TSR. Personally, I would like to see a 2"-deep boxed set called "Oerth: The Rest of the World," with details on every other continent and country, but that doesn't look very likely. Not all gamers would like such a product, either, even among dedicated GREYHAWK campaign fans (as per QSamantha, 95-02-25).

The WORLD OF GREYHAWK(R) setting, I believe, was originally designed to be "lean" on background to allow DMs to flesh out the material as they saw fit. DMs were given great freedom to make up any kind of Veluna or Nyrond or Nyr Dyv they liked, and many DMs took up the challenge. No one DM's concept of Iuz was any better than any other. Truly a world for the people! (See ExTSR's notes of 95-02-24, 3rd paragraph.)

Still, there is already a fair amount of material in official GREYHAWK(R) material concerning Oerth and Oerik, and reasonable assumptions can be made about the world that allow any DM to construct a Big Picture of things. Some of my own guesswork follows. I would be very pleased if anyone would add comments and extra material to this, especially if you can pull stuff out of the published works on the GREYHAWK campaign.

For one thing, there is a very broad but amazingly little-discussed map of eastern and central Oerik in the 1983 WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting, on page 18 of the Glossography. Those of you who are cartographically inclined could recopy this map onto a large sheet of hex- or square-grid graph paper, and you will find that it virtually **doubles** the area usually shown in products of the Flanaess. Notice the tremendous number of islands along the coasts, the great mountain ranges dividing the continent into numerous separate lowlands, and the possible appearance of two other continents or huge islands in the upper left and lower right parts of the map. (The southeastern "continent" is where Hepmonaland lies on the northernmost tip.) Using information on the weather of the Flanaess from the boxed set's guidebooks or from DRAGON(R) issue #68, in which the material originally appeared, climatic regions may be drawn out over Oerik with reasonable guesses on accompanying vegetation, wildlife, and monsters. Assuming that Oerth rotates like our own world, most air currents would blow from west to east (though volcanoes in the Crystalmists are said to drop ash to the west onto the Sea of Dust--a notable exception).

The 1983 Guide to the WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting offers some history on eastern Oerik that makes it clear that the Suel, Oeridians, and Baklunish peoples migrated from their ruined western nations, traveling east to the Flanaess (Guide, pages 8 and 10). Details of the destruction (Guide, page 8; GREYHAWK Adventures, pages 89-90 and 98-99) lead me to think that the coast along the warm Dramidj Ocean where the Baklunish lived is probably known for its steppes and deserts, lack of old ruins, and many humanoids farther inland. The cultural basis for the area seems to be Middle Eastern--Persian, Arabian, or whatever. Similar countries probably lie westward along the coast, perhaps merging farther westward with India-type nations (vaguely like the Gupta Empire, Mogul Empire, etc.) and/or East

Asian cultures (i.e., Oriental Adventures lands). I see that in the 1st Edition DMG, on page 89, that Gary Gygax provided lots of royal and noble titles of which nearly all were used in the 1983 WORLD OF GREYHAWK boxed set except for the Indian and Mongol/Tartar ones. It's a logical trend, though admittedly some parts of the Flanaess do not much resemble European medieval history very closely (e.g., the Suel/Suloise Empire).

Prior to its destruction, the "fertile realm" of the Suloise Empire is said to have extended for a thousand miles west and south of (I assume) the northeastern border of the Sea of Dust (Guide, page 61). This region, with an empire over 5,000 years old by the timetable in the Guide on page 9, would have covered much of the southern part of Oerik as shown in the Glossography's map on page 18; we might assume this area, too, is now ruined desert. No culture beyond nomadic ones appears to have survived here. Some of you have mentioned that you think of the Suel as Melnibonean in flavor. I tend to think of them as closer to feudal racist imperialists who probably "ethnically cleansed" or enslaved other cultures and nations in and around their own. (See comments on the "vileness of the Suloise" in the Guide, page 8.)

There's no reason, however, that a few surviving Baklunish, Oeridians, and Suel could not have migrated westward, setting up small kingdoms along the way and running into other peoples as well as each other. I'd guess that at least 50-60 more nations remain to be discovered on Oerik outside the Flanaess, adding up to half-again that number for island nations. Exactly what kind of cultures inhabit the far west and south of Oerik is anyone's guess, but I do note the appearance of a "blue-black" nomadic people deep in the Sea of Dust who apparently migrated there from regions farther south and west (GREYHAWK Adventures, pages 90-91), probably areas closer to the equator. Though lots of nonhistorical fantasy has worked its way into Oerth's origins, it seems that Oerik is primarily European/Islamic in feel. Because of the abortive attempt to put Oriental cultures in GREYHAWK campaigns, I want to put at least a few such nations in the west or south (or both). Maybe the truly Oriental cultures lie on another continent, but some migrant groups have arrived along the southern and western coasts.

I've reviewed a great deal of the GREYHAWK campaign literature (as per the GREYHAWK index I posted, "GREYDEX"--glad to see it has been of help!), and there is very little or nothing to indicate that any other region of the world has recently had an effect on the Flanaess. There are tremendously powerful wizards and priests in the Flanaess, and none seem to have much interest in the rest of Oerth. Perhaps this is because of a Flanaess-centric view that holds the rest of the world as worthless (as per the Guide, page 4), or perhaps--and there is much evidence to support this--the rest of the world isn't very friendly, isn't very advanced culturally, or is cut off by geographic or magical/god-created boundaries. The Suel-Baklunish wars certainly contributed to the ruin of civilization across much of Oerik, as the two empires are pointedly noted to have fought for control of the whole continent (Guide, page 61). It can be fairly said, as a side thought, that the Flanaess nations are all post-holocaust cultures, much as if North America had been divided into petty states following a nuclear war with the Soviet Union. (This is an interesting point to compare with QSamantha's comments of 95-02-25; the world's been messed over far more dramatically in the past.)

My guess is that there are coastal and inland nations of western Oerik that are as advanced as those of the Flanaess, but there are probably few such nations and they are mostly small in size, competing with one another over local resources like everyone does in the Flanaess. Few or no big advanced empires exist, or else they would have gotten around to the City of Greyhawk by now. Of course, a big empire might be introverted and xenophobic, as some Chinese empires in the past were, or fairly primitive in magic and technology, unable to reach far beyond its borders.

Why don't these nations now trade with eastern realms? Because (take your pick): the mountains or deserts are impassable; too many humanoids and evil nations lie between; they are occupied with other projects (wars, surviving droughts, etc.); their gods don't wish them to head east; they fear the east (too close to the original devastation of the Suel-Baklunish wars, with lots of bad legends of the time to boot); the seas are full of awful monsters, storms, and pirates (which they are); or such exploration simply costs too much. (After all, we stopped going to the Moon because of budgetary reasons.) I notice that even SPELLJAMMER(R) campaign materials on Oerth say nothing about any region of Oerth other than the Flanaess; this was obviously intentional on the part of the designers, who worked only with what was previously known, but it does contribute to the idea that the Flanaess is where the important stuff happens on Oerth.

This is all guesswork, of course, and it doesn't mean that Oerik or other Oerth continents couldn't have major cultures and nations and empires. I wanted to make some projections based on what was published, and a fairly consistent picture does tend to emerge from the fog. Comments? Questions? More ideas? Please post!

I have some other long notes to drop about other topics here, like druids and how to get a <From the Ashes> campaign out of the darkness, but they can wait. And NiteScreed's notes from 95-02-26 look good to me.

Nigel D. Findley, the prolific and justly famous author and game designer who contributed much to the lore of the GREYHAWK(R) campaign, died of a heart attack two weeks ago this Sunday morning at his apartment in

Vancouver, B.C. He was only 35. I believe he was cremated last week in a private ceremony. More news about his death has probably been posted elsewhere in the TSR section here and in gaming forums in other on-line services and the Internet. I apologize for not mentioning this news earlier; I've been very distracted.

I edited a number of Nigel's articles for DRAGON(R) Magazine (he did great stuff) and worked with him on the six-part SPELLJAMMER(R) novel series (the Cloakmaster Cycle), to which Nigel contributed two volumes. Those who love the Flanaess might remember Nigel's work from <Greyspace>, the SPELLJAMMER accessory covering the "solar system" of Oerth, and his work on GREYHAWK Adventures and <Fate of Istus>. My fiancée and I enjoyed speaking with Nigel at the past two GEN CON(R) game fairs, and my fiancée was one of his legion of female admirers. ("Wow! He's <cute>!" she said, or words to that effect.) He was always in a pleasant humor and was one of the most agreeable people you could ever hope to meet.

His loss is a terrible one. He was a good man, and I miss him very much.

DRUIDS: Though I am aware that some of you don't care for the "Complete Handbook" series, those of you developing druids in GREYHAWK(R) campaigns might want to look at <The Complete Druid's Handbook> anyway. I oversaw its production when I was in charge of the AD&D(R) product line, did some preliminary editing on it, and later wrote an article about it in DRAGON(R) Magazine (issue #209). It covers a very wide range of druid-related topics, including druidic branches based on zoogeographic realms (arctic, cold forest, jungle, desert, etc.), druidic influence on agriculture, new character kits (outlaws, savages, village druids, etc.), new druidic races (elves, dryads, satyrs, lizard men, etc.), druidic orders (domains and circles), the Shadow Circle (druids who have a nasty anticivilization streak in them), new spells and magical items, herbal magic, and sacred groves. In my DRAGON article, I expanded on the druidic branches to suggest modifications to characters based on their environment, and discussed ways to break down the Flanaess into zoogeographic regions that would affect the distribution of wildlife across the land. <The Book of Humanoids> also introduces a few new PC races that can become druids (alaghi, centaurs, swanmays, and saurials--the latter from the Realms); I really liked the thought of a druid centaur.

I do think that druids of all types would start to move against Iuz and other evil forces after the Greyhawk Wars, to restore the "balance" that once existed. This could make for some interesting all-druid campaigns, maybe with different races (human, elven, halfling, centaur, etc.) and branches participating. The druids could conceivably ignore good-aligned forces working toward the same goals, or help them out just enough to enable the good guys to stomp some evil and save the druids the trouble.

I also think that the Hierophants in particular would find it interesting to cause Iuz and the Scarlet Brotherhood some serious grief; they could travel around in disguise, playing Gandalf's game of nudging lesser powers into accomplishing great ends. Get out your copy of J.R.R. Tolkien's <Unfinished Tales> and read the section on "The Quest of Erebor," which details Gandalf's plans, strategic and tactical, to bring down Sauron. Gandalf didn't know everything at first, and neither would a Hierophant from the Flanaess. (Oerth is full of secrets and plots, after all.) Iuz has spies everywhere--but so would a Hierophant.

If you are the DM for a druid-centered campaign, you could develop a major Hierophant NPC (maybe one step below a quasi-deity, on a level with Mordenkainen), give him a goal to accomplish (destroy, capture, or drive off Iuz and shatter the coherence of his armies, allowing them to disintegrate over time), and have him quietly nudge some lower-level druids and allies into action. The Hierophant NPC (even in disguise) might find himself the target of assassination plots, discover that his PC helpers aren't following his instructions closely enough or have taken off to pursue their own ends, or that he misinterpreted some bit of data and has made an error in his planning. The lower-level PCs could supply the Hierophant with intelligence data, commit havoc and sabotage, destroy patrols, free captive peasants and animals, inspire resistance movements, convert populations to their cause, and otherwise drive Iuz and his underlings to distraction. (I keep thinking about the movie <Red Dawn>--anyone else getting a similar picture?) Several people have mentioned using Keoland as a base for druidic activities. I like this idea; it would be an excellent center for a long-term druid-centered campaign ranging over the entire Flanaess.

BluSponge (95-02-25) comments that new nations might arise from the aftermath of the wars. I'm sure this possibility has not been lost on the druids, whose talents at managing agriculture, hunting, and livestock are well known to the common folk--and whose good advice, foe-destroying spells, and skills at weather manipulation are well known to rulers. Druids would be unlikely to head any government, but if they win hearts and minds the populace and rulers both, they can dictate policy behind the scenes and keep their lands safe from harm. Druids would take the long view in all cases, and I can't see that they would be uninterested in subtly managing humanity as just another part of the Natural Order. Some people think the Greyhawk Wars were a disaster. Druids might see it as an opportunity.

CITY OF GREYHAWK: I passed along to Anne Brown the questions posted by Andwin (95-03-01) on the boxed set. Here are her answers, based on her checking of the rules and her own work on the Falcon Trilogy:

1. One-half inch on the big map is about 100 feet, based on measuring smaller areas and extrapolating the results.

2. The Garbage Hills are off the map, a little farther along the river. Place the Grey College Observatory to the east of the Grand Citadel, in the open space just south of the notch in the forest.

3. Do you mean the Grand Citadel instead of "castle"? The Grand Citadel houses the constabulary and prison for the city. Also, consider the poster map to be the "public knowledge" map, while the <Gem of the Flanaess> map is the ACTUAL map, to preserve some "trade secrets."

4. Yes, that gate is not named in the box. Call it Cuthbert's Gate. By the way, that's the point where the new city meets the High Quarter. The Old City is all the way to the south.

5. No time to look this one up right now. More later, perhaps.

6. Yes, they contradict each other. Maybe getting a chance to look at the maps depends on who you know. If you're an official or a friend of the guild, you're in luck. Use whichever answer best suits the adventure you are running.

Ann could not resist suggesting the Falcon Trilogy (WGA1, WGA2, WGA3) to those who want to tramp around in the city. She enjoyed working on it.

Note to MrBobKing (95-02-26): I do read all the messages, but I don't have any information on Cobb Darg. Check the index and see if anything suggests itself as a resource. Good luck!

Note to Psychlops (95-02-27): Thanks for mention of Rob's "Zayene" modules. I'd never heard of them. Has anyone ever seen them? And Paul Jaquays is now TSR's Director of Graphic Design. He's an incredibly great guy . . . for a Republican. :)

Note to NightScreed (95-02-27): I don't think you understood my posting about mature games. I pointed out that many people might not agree on what constitutes a mature game. Some think it must have lots of sex, violence, and death. Some think it must have moral ambiguity. Some think the characters must all be tainted by evil. Some think it is mature if all the players are over 30. I've heard lots of definitions and arguments. I liked your 10-point list, but if you pursue the topic long enough, you will encounter some arguments to the contrary. I *never* said it was impossible to develop a mature game--but many might not accept the game as mature. Some people say that White Wolf's Vampire game is mature, but some think it isn't. ("Look at the players!" they cry.) A clear definition of a "mature game" is required, and your 10-point plan strikes me as a very good set-up.

And as for your baiting me, I'm sorry I haven't gotten into an argument with you here, but it isn't worth my time. I like reading your comments, and I enjoy offering my own ideas on developing GREYHAWK campaigns. But game arguments are a waste. Cheers!

Three cheers for Psychlops! Here, here! It pleased me enormously to read his message from 3-4-95 on the Olman Empire. Psychlops reread an old "classic" GREYHAWK(R) adventure and dragged a huge amount of valuable information from it that everyone can use in their campaigns. We can do this with *all* of the published GREYHAWK material and share it here, alerting all DMs to potential adventures and campaign hooks. One of my "Living Galaxy" columns (POLYHEDRON(R) issue #88, October 1993) talked about doing spin-off adventures from published modules, thus creating a powerful air of authenticity and reality around the campaign.

Look at S2 <White Plume Mountain>, for instance. (I'm using the 1981 version.) Here are some of the spin-off adventures and campaign ideas I got from this:

1. The map on page 3 makes references to the "cursed ruins of Castle Mukos"; a possible monster in the "Twisted Thickets"; a cave (possibly with a hidden dungeon) called "Dead Gnoll's Eyesocket"; the "Hut of Thingizzard," a potion-making being that the reader is warned about; and the lair of "Dragotha, the Undead Dragon" (eventually detailed in DRAGON(R) issue #134, page 28). Each of these areas could be connected to the tale of White Plume Mountain, or developed separately and merely sharing the neighborhood. The PCs could be in this area for a long time.

2. Keraptis himself (or the "false Keraptis") should be developed as an NPC lich, wizard vampire, immortal wizard, or whatever. (I don't recall if he shows up anywhere else in the published lore.) He might have other dungeon lairs scattered across Oerik, some perhaps connected by gates or teleporters to allow a DM to send heroes into unexplored areas off the main map of the Flanaess.

3. About 1,300 years ago, the Baklunish-Suloise Wars had not yet started. What was Keraptis's political affiliation? What was he like then? What did he want out of life? How did his actions affect the world later? How can part of his legend be brought to life in other ways, like the discovery of one of his diaries with a map to one of his secret lairs (see #2 above)? Some of his evil gnome helpers might still be around, too, in undead form.

4. The three superweapons (Wave, Blackrazor, and Whelm) certainly have very involved histories, and many people are probably seeking them. If the weapons were returned to their owners, they might reappear later in other hands--won in battle, stolen by thieves, etc. The heroes would sure hate to be on the receiving end of Blackrazor, I bet. I would change Wave's patron deity to an Oerth sea-god and have the tritons, merman, sea elves, or one nation's army and navy out in force trying to recover it.

5. Any of the NPC guardians (some of whom were probably adventurers who were forcibly converted to serve the being calling itself Keraptis) could have important connections elsewhere in the world. Relatives might be searching for them, enemies might be hunting them, and one of the heroes might even be related to a particular NPC captive. The NPC monsters can be treated in the same manner. (Suppose a foreign city was offering a reward for the safe recovery of its recently stolen gigantic crab....)

6. If White Plume Mountain is cleaned out by the heroes, it might be reinhabited by other creatures (and reconstructed by Keraptis, if he was not found and slain). If it was not cleaned out, the monsters therein might gather forces and begin raiding the countryside, requiring the aid of heroes to reconquer it and clean it out for good. The complex might even have one or more secret gates to other places hidden within it, gates that the party overlooked or would not have found on their first foray inside.

7. White Plume Mountain, if I am reading the maps correctly, now lies within the lands of Iuz. What if Iuz or one of his captains is now using WPM as his main military center? All of the places in #1 above could have been converted to serve military ends (e.g., Thingizzard now makes potions for Iuz, Dragotha has been bargained or threatened into serving Iuz, etc.). Think of the possibilities!

8. What exactly was "Keraptis's" motivation for stealing the superweapons? Was he just having fun? Was he trying to stir up some specific sort of trouble? Was he accomplishing something secret and nasty as a result? DMs should think about the purpose behind this peculiar adventure.

You get the idea. I'm looking over some of the other old and more recent modules for spin-offs that might be of interest to those here. More on this later. Hastily yours, Roger.

To Joe G K (3/8): No other GREYHAWK(R) products are slated for production at the moment, but a "Book of Lairs" would be a nice touch for the Flanaess.

To LEOMUND (3/12): Hi, there! I read your "Tiny Hut" column quite regularly and enjoyed it. I confess that I've never heard of L3 <Deep Dwarven Delve>. For a moment I thought you were talking about Ed Greenwood's 1990 FORGOTTEN REALMS(R) accessory, <Dwarves Deep>. That was a sourcebook and huge map of the dwarven-controlled underdark in the Realms. I'll ask around and see if anyone knows where L3 is. When was it written? What was it about? What was its status? Enquiring minds want to know.

I'm working on a long post about gates in Oerth and where they lead and why they go there, but it's proving to be time consuming. I'm also being distracted by other folders here; there's a lot to read. Meanwhile, I have some questions:

Who here is now actively playing in or refereeing a GREYHAWK campaign? Who used to play in one but isn't now? What is your campaign like? What character types do the players like to use? Where on Oerth is your campaign centered? What published game products does the DM use? Which published GREYHAWK products are specifically excluded, and why? What kinds of adventures do people like to play? (Pretend that this is a focus group or something; don't feel forced to answer everything if you've already said it.)

This stuff would clarify for me exactly what every else's experience is with this campaign. As for me: I played (briefly) in a GREYHAWK campaign about 10 years ago. It didn't grab me at the time, but in recent years I've found myself looking at GREYHAWK materials a lot and feeling nostalgic. I can barely remember anything about the campaign except that it took place in Louisville and the DM wanted to make one country a lot like Scotland. He even had a new character class for the campaign, the Highlander. (This was before the movie, so the Highlander wasn't immortal, just a berserk fighter with a kilt and blue face paint. The campaign DM now works as an attorney for a U.S. Congressman in Washington, D.C. I am not making this up.) The product I would most like to see is a boxed set with maps and information on the rest of the world, or at least Oerik, plus a ton of adventures and campaign ideas.

Moore later when I get back to my home computer with some free time. Cheers! Roger

Druids in Greyhawk

Subj: Druids 1

95-02-28 02:25:54 EST

From: DM ScottW

The "Great" Druid is the overseer, or head of any given circle of druids. Usually there is but one Circle in and given Region, though Region could be interpreted as a Local Geographical Region (A Large wood, Desert, Plain, etc.), Kingdom, or even Continent. I prefer to use the Local Geographical Region my self, though on occasion there may be more than one Circle in such a region of extremely large size, if there is sufficient anti-druidical activity present (i.e. perhaps now the Vesve, there could be a new Circle forming in the north-east behind the areas that Iuz has conquered).

The "Grand" Druid is supposed to be a solitary figure, one per WORLD, thus making this post the most demanding position on that world. Imagine having to coordinate the activities of every druid on the planet. Thus this post is usually left by those that attain it in order to join the Hierophants, the overseers of not only any given planet, but the ultimate keepers of the Balance upon the Prime Plane.

The Hierophants are still mortal beings though they do have a greatly expanded lifetime, and have often disappeared for years or even centuries only to reappear without having aged a day. With the secrets they uncover, they are often on par with the heroes of the sagas, and perhaps (though modesty prevents them from saying so) the equal of many of the demi-powers. Regardless, the duties imposed upon the Hierophants are great indeed. They have passed beyond the actual control of the lower ranking druids, but often use them upon the mortal spheres to carry out their wishes. Truly, the concerns of the Hierophant's reach much further than the Prime Plane alone. When matters on the Prime Plane must be attended, the Hierophant's often contact the current Grand Druid, outlining the course of action they believe must be taken. The Hierophants go to the Grand Druid as a matter of respect, never has a Grand Druid refused the request of the Cabal (the Cabal is the name of the Circle of the highest ranking Hierophants), though to be sure the Hierophant's would more than likely carry out the plan even if the Grand Druid refused their request.

Please note that the information provided works equally well with either description of these beings. The description in the 1st Edition is how I view the druids, though the new description in the 2nd Edition is changed a little, they are still close enough to note that they are but two ways of listing the same beings.

Truly more than one society of Druids exists upon Oerth. Each of these societies, i.e., Circles is lead by a Great Druid. This Great Druid is the overseer of his/her area. In turn these Circles, Societies as you refer to them, are united under the Grand Druid. To put in terms of our own world, each Circle/Society/Region could be considered a State. Each Circle is headed by a Great Druid, our in our terms, a Governor. In turn, the various Circles are joined under the rule of the greater governing body, we would describe this as a Country. The ultimate figure in power is the Grand Druid, we might call him/her the President, King, Emperor, etc. So if Hrsnash wishes to take the thankless job of Grand Druid, as long as there are no contenders as written in the laws of the Druids, he shall ascend to the post. Truly, any that wish to contend, that is any of the other Great Druids, must contend as it was written. Still many of the Great Ones are not ready to ascend this post, they are contented, or truly directly involved, with watching over their Circles and the lands that they protect. So in answer to your question, "Is there not more than one society of Druids in fair old Greyhawk?" Yes, each Society is a Circle, each Circle is but a part of the whole greater family upon Oerth.

Subj: Druids and the gods I
95-02-28 18:26:00 EST
From: Hrsnash

Why would those druids who honor the Shalm have to belong to a different order than the druids of Beory (or the druidic followers of Ehlonna, etc.)?

The druid organization should, like any organization, include people of different persuasions and beliefs. I mean, if we had a different druid organization for each god, then there would be more Grand Druids running around a single forest than you could shake a stick at (one that fell naturally from the trees, of course).

I would suggest that there may be particular orders of druids within any one druid organization (one land or region), and perhaps many more druids (of lower level) who do not have a particular patron. The Grand Druid, I believe, would have to rise above all partisan bickering in his (or her) capacity as chief of all.

On the other hand, if druid organizations were more firmly tied to gods, then that would help prevent any problems arising from regional variance of all who worship the same deity (e.g. whether the followers of Obad-Hai in Geoff are really different from those followers of Obad-Hai from the Fellreev [sp?]).

The same problem arises with clerics. Just what do the followers of Pholtus in Keoland have to do with the Theocracy of the Pale? What about Veluna? Does that state have religious preeminence over all of the other states (and lawful good religions) in the area? And what significance do we derive from the god the Archcleric claims as patron? If the Archcleric is a follower of Rao (which seems to have been Sargent's interpretation), then does that give him any authority over the followers of Cuthbert and Pholtus, or over Heironeous? I have run into this problem repeatedly in trying to make over the kingdoms of the Flanaess as medieval kingdoms--the resulting structure of the various religions does not strike me as particularly "Greyhawkian."

Part of the problem, as I see it, lies in the tendency to overdevelop the world--a tendency that many DMs will, I think, recognize. The desire to answer every question regarding the world's political, religious, and social structure is bound to end in frustration. I also think it is important to note that all of this sort of agonizing search for development is unnecessary to actual play. What players want to know is more like--are there any druids in this forest? Are there any who can reincarnate my dead buddy? If we got to the next town, would we find a cleric who could cast a raise dead spell? The actual religious structure or the number of 9th level clerics in a given kingdom can be kept fuzzy, since players will ignore them all until they need them anyway.

Anyway, I think what I was about to say is that we create the NPCs and develop the world as it becomes necessary in the contexts of our own games. Further development is excess baggage--and I think many of the current game supplements have a lot of excess baggage.

So what does this mean in terms of Council work and what we are trying to accomplish?

I think it means that we do not have to develop the entire druidic structure, or determine the precise relationships among the different representatives of lawful good. These relationships will emerge from the individual work that is done in the various areas (and of which each DM will choose what best suits the campaign s/he wishes to run).

When I think as a player rather than as a creator of a whole world, I find that what I will want to know is something like, "What are my chances of running into a druid in the Dim Forest? Will this NPC be helpful or hostile?" If I am running a 3rd level thief, and the druid I meet is 8th level, chances are I won't need to know anything about how to find a higher level druid. If I am running a 12th level paladin, chances are that I don't need to know how many 3rd level druids are to be found in the forest--but I sure as heck would want to know if I have any chance of running into a ranking druid.

We create the NPCs we need based on the level of the adventure we happen to be running. I would suggest that the Council members focus on developing all the information that is necessary to play the game they want to play, and stay away from information about the world for its own sake. This would mean that our development of the areas we are working on be tied quite specifically to adventure modules we may be setting in those areas. This could apply to cities and towns as well--no development unless play calls for it. What I am interested in, in other words, is not the city of Irongate (or Cryllor, which I am working on myself for that matter) itself, just in case players happen to be in the neighborhood. I want a reason to be interested in Irongate (or the druids of the Vesve Forest, etc). Players are not tourists, and they don't just want to see the sights. If there is a real reason to visit Irongate, the city will come to life. If not, specific development will be a waste of valuable time and creativity.

Submissions to the Oerth Journal, then, can be built around module-type adventures. The only stipulation might be that these adventures be somehow closely connected to the events of the World of Greyhawk, and not just

independent adventures that any DM can insert into his/her campaign--possibly epic modules like T1-4, A1-4, or G1-Q1.

It is also possible that someone would want to draw up a Battlesystem scenario set in the Flanaess. Just no development without cause....

I suppose I have come relatively far from what I had intended to say in the original post. I had no idea my thoughts would tend in this direction when I started to write. But now that I have collected my thoughts I find myself more and more persuaded by them.

Subj: Re:Druids
95-03-01 22:43:08 EST
From: Qsamantha

I distinguish between Nature Druids, who acknowledge no deity, but revere nature as a general principle, and Dedicated Druids, who worship nature as manifested by one of the nature deities. The hierarchy of Nature Druids is separate from that of Dedicated Druids and each nature deity's Dedicated Druids have hierarchies separate from each other. All druids have mutual respect for one another as they recognize that they worship the same essential principle. They also cooperate. Antagonism of any kind is virtually unknown.

Nature Druids tend to operate in wild forests and mountains. Dedicated Druids operate in settled agricultural areas and surrounding forests or mountains. Jurisdictions do overlap but this is not a source of contention.

Nature Druids follow the organizational structure laid out in the PH. There can be only 3 Arch Druids for each geographical region. In my campaign these regions are:

Bissel to the Hold of Sea Princes,
The Vesve,
The Gnarly/Welkwood/Suss Forest,
The Celadon Forest,
The Fellreev/Phostwood/Gamboge,
The Adri/Grandwood/Rieu Wood/ Menowood, and
The Hraak to Loftwood, including the Barbarian states of the Northeast.

The title of Grand Druid rotates among these regions every 7 years and the 3 Arch Druids of the region whose turn it is contend among themselves for the title. The winner then selects 3 Arch Druids from regions other than his own to serve him during his tenure.

Each Dedicated Druid sect has only 3 Arch Druids regardless of how widely their deity is worshipped. A single Grand Druid oversees the sect aided by an additional 3 Arch Druids dedicated to the Grand Druid's service. Thus, each sect has one Grand Druid and 3 Arch Druids that serve him as well as 3 Arch Druids at large.

Heiropphant level druids are another post.

Subj: Druids & Gods & how it fits, pt1
95-03-02 00:10:06 EST
From: AraganHOTC

I have been brought many of your queries by DM ScottW, and have some answers in return. Before I get to these, I must point out an error that had been made by my friend DM ScottW. The position of the Grand Druid can only be reached by appointment from the previous holder of that post. It is unfortunate that the Grand Druidess Volga has passed before naming her successor. In the light of such an occurrence, the members of the Cabal, and the current Great Druids held a council. The result of this meeting was to state that any who wish to attain the seat of the Great Druid need only state their desire. If more than one candidate presents himself or herself, then the trial by combat shall take place as written for ascension within a Circle. As of this date, only Hrsnash has come forth, declaring a desire to attain this seat...

To answer the question of how the druids that worship a deity, rather than nature itself, could fit into a structure of the Circles, we must understand just what it is that druid's revere. The subject of the Druids worship is always Nature as a whole, however some druids see the need to personify this force, or look to a deity to provide direction. Beory, the Oerth Mother, is the general personification of nature, thus all druids ultimately pay homage to her, though they may follow the tenants of another Deity. Truly Beory is a Power as real as any other in the multi-

verse, it seems she is not a jealous Power though. She allows the druids to follow other deities teachings, as long as these deities are concerned with nature.

Obad-Hai (The Shalm)- Those that follow Obad-Hai are part of a great rivalry, truly even an enmity, with the followers of Ehlonna of the Forests. Obad-Hai is a True-Neutral Power that strives to have his followers live in peace and harmony with nature, his followers are more likely found in the barbaric regions as Obad-Hai dislikes cities. It is even rumored that a secret Order of druids is forming, these druids wish to bring the downfall of all but the most simple villages. Some believe that Obad-Hai is favoring these druids above all others.

Ehlonna of the Forest- As was stated above, there exists an enmity betwixt Ehlonna and Obad-Hai. This enmity does carry down to the druidical followers of these Powers as well. Perhaps the greatest cause of enmity of these factions stems from the ethical outlook of the deities. Ehlonna is definitely more Good than Neutral, and she tends to give aid to the Good faerie folk while opposing the evil humanoids. While many druids do revere Ehlonna, the majority of such individuals also act as rangers; thus providing a more militant force to rebuff the evil humanoids.

Farlanghn the Wanderer- There is a misconception among many beings that most of the priests of Farlanghn are druids, nay gentle reader, few druids revere the Wanderer. Those which follow his tenants can never achieve greatness within a circle of druids for they rarely remain long enough to become a member of any given Circle; however, among the aids to the Grand Druid there are those which profess to follow The Wanderer, indeed they would seem most well suited to the life of traveling they must endure when bringing the Law of the Grand One to the various Circles of the Lands.

How do the druids that worship deities fit into the Circles? The druids rise in power among the Circle to which they belong as they normally would. Neither those that worship Beory nor those which revere Obad-Hai make any differentiation between the various levels of power within the Circle, all druids are considered equal in the eyes of the other druids that worship the same deity; however, they still maintain their respective ranking within the Circle.

As was stated, the few druids that revere Farlanghn the Wanderer, are not able to rise above 11th Level (By the reckoning of both views of the druids) unless they are attendants of the Grand Druid. The druids of Farlanghn may never become a Great Druid as they are not part of any Circle. They may attain 14th Level, but are still considered Arch-Druids. Upon gaining 15th level, these druids actually become Hierophant-Initiates, they must relinquish all earned Experience AFTER they are accepted as Initiates. Unlike the Grand Druid, these Initiates must earn one million XP (as opposed to 500,000 for the Great Druid) before they can become a member of the Hierophants. After the Initiate is accepted, he/she must again relinquish all XP, but thereafter may progress as is normal for a Hierophant.

There are still other deities that do have druidical followers, though by no means are these druids of any great number.

Boccob the Uncaring, deity of Magic and Arcane Knowledge, has some druid's that also dabble in or are quite proficient in the casting of Wizard's magic. These druids tend to follow Boccob trying to perfect their magic, both of Druidical nature and that of Wizardry, in the hopes of using the arcane knowledge to better serve nature.

Istus, our Lady of Fate, has a few druids that revere her as the ultimate keeper of the balance. She who keeps the key to all doors of fate and destiny can be implored to give small favors to the druids in hopes of maintaining the balance, thereby preserving their beliefs.

Pelor has not had any known druidical followers; however all druids do ask the Sun god's assistance at various times.

Procan, god of the seas, does have some few druidical followers, mostly among fisher villages or the aquatic races beneath the seas.

Celestian's has not had any druidical followers, though the members of the Hierophants do pay some small homage to him.

Bralm of the Insects druid's number but a few.

Geshtai, provider of the Life-giving Waters was well revered at one time, though currently there are few that hold him in reverence.

Velnius, lord of the Skies, Bringer of the Rains, still has a fairly strong presence on Oerth. Farmers and fishers both hold the tenants of this deity, thus many druids still follow him.

The powers of the seasons and winds Wenta (Autumn/West), Telchur (Winter/North), Atroa (Spring/East), and Sotilion (Summer/South) are held in high esteem by all druids.

Note that even though there may not be any druids that follow any given one of these deities at any given time, all druids at some time pay homage to each of them.

Now we reach an even more interesting problem. By reckoning of the older view of the druid, most races had druidical representation. However, it is now suggested that only Humans hold the views of the druids sacred. I say this is an impossibility. Halflings, Elves, and Humans all have members that hold the tenants of druidism. The previously mentioned possibilities of the druids possessing other abilities, such as the Ranger/Druids of Ehlonna and the Wizard/Druids of Boccob, seems to prove this point. Ah, but I digress, this is another discussion for another day.

Subj: Druidic "sects"
95-03-02 20:46:10 EST
From: Hrsnash

Protestants and Catholics differ in doctrine, not just "dogma." The difference between transubstantiation and a purely symbolic Eucharist is a whole world of difference. Moreover, variations within Catholicism and Protestantism tend to emphasize different ideas of "God." Compare Arian and Arminian notions about Jesus, for instance, with Baptist, and with Catholic ideas. What you will find is that, in many cases, the idea of "God" differs so significantly from religion to religion that one must conclude, de facto, that these religions worship different "Gods" In fact the spread of Christianity throughout Europe in the Dark Ages was possible because one "God" subsumed the powers of many "gods," who thereafter became only aspects of the one (appearing in concrete form often in the persons of the Catholic "saints"). Finally, in AD&D, religion is polytheistic, whereas Christianity is monotheistic. In polytheistic society, it is perfectly possible for priests of different "gods" to belong to the same religious "Order" or "organization." So your analogy fails on three counts (the specious notion of the essential identity of all forms of Christianity, a misapprehension about the nature of monotheistic thought itself, and the application of monotheistic principles to what is essentially a polytheistic game world).

I have found that it is a wasted effort to try to unify religious worship in the Flanaess. In another game world, I suppose it would be possible to explain the rise of different religions as splinter groups of one earlier "unified" religion (although this notion itself betrays monotheistic thinking--why should original religion be "unified"?). In fact, in my own campaign world Europa (a fantasy Dark Age Europe), this is the case. Here the roles of traditional AD&D "gods" are filled by the "saints" (from whence cometh our own beloved Cuthbert the Mysteriously Lost) and "devils" or "demons." But in the Flanaess, gods obviously do not originate as "branches" of an earlier god. Indeed, the very idea of heresy is theoretically impossible in a world where the gods actually exist in concrete form. Heresy is possible when religious organization is dictated by human custom, not in cases when it is established by the gods themselves!

I do not necessarily disagree with the substance of Nagrom's post, that druids all worship the same gods of nature. That certainly is one possible way one can set up a druid organization. But I also think that the absence of rivalry among druids might lead to rather dull sessions involving them--a drab, lifeless notion of druidic structure that tediously reiterates certain utopian ideas about nature more than it creates any opportunities for interesting gaming. By contrast, I would point to QSamantha's excellent post on druidic structure, some of the best ideas I have seen on druid organizations, published or unpublished.

My own inclination is still to leave larger questions about structure unanswered, as this leaves room for my players to improvise.

So much on druidic "sects." I'm afraid my homophonic companion post will have to appear someplace where Puritan delicacy (which is ever in evidence where the vicious, the greedy, and the insatiable are all at their most active) has not yet appeared to stifle discourse it can mark as "vulgar." (Note the Puritans, who did not have much trouble

sleeping after annihilating the Indians, were especially delicate in table manners, speech, and matters of personal hygiene. What sick, private compulsions and fantasies such behavior had to cover over this author does not choose to imagine, but in fairness it must be added that the Puritans were very fine men of business, as was Jacob Marley, and as, alas, EGG was not....)

Subj: Druids & Demi-humans
95-03-02 21:08:06 EST
From: QSamantha

In my campaign demi-humans have fewer druids because in each demi-human pantheon there are powers that correspond to those aspects of nature that are most important to that race. For example, dwarves as a rule do not revere nature as much as they revere that aspect of nature associated with mountains, so there is less call for druids because specialty priests fill their role in dwarven society with respect to mountains. Much the same can be said for gnomes and halflings. Even elves have few druids because so many elven powers are already sylvan and fill the role of druids. It's a psychological thing.

While there are demi-human druids, they are rare. Demi-human druids are regarded with suspicion by human druids because they are so unusual. Consequently, demi-human druids form their own secretive circles. Each race has its own distinct hierarchy that conforms to the organizational structure in the PH. These circles tend to see the balance in terms of their own race. The balance must be maintained but for their race's advantage. Demi-human druids are thus much more activist than their human fellows. This is another reason demi-human druids are regarded with suspicion.

The basis of this perception of the balance is the way demi-humans relate to specific aspects of nature. For example, dwarves see nature and the balance in terms of the mountains. This is their racial outlook. While they acknowledge other aspects of nature, dwarves are by nature attuned to the earth. Because humans prefer no particular environment, their perception of nature and the balance is much broader. To expect demi-human druids to regard nature the same as human druids is to ignore their racial psychology and turn them into funny looking humans. Each race is different in the exact details of its druidic practices but each reflects the way that race sees nature.

In my campaign, the following powers have Dedicated Druids:

Beory
Ehlonna and
Obad-Hai

No other powers have druids in their service. All demi-human druids are Nature Druids and serve no specific deity, even if that deity has a natural aspect.

Obad-Hai is served exclusively by druids and has no other type of Priests. As a druid in The Shalm's service rises in level certain types of Priest Spells not normally available to druids become available. Consequently, Dedicated Druids of Obad-Hai are regarded as not "true" druids by some but are still accorded respect. The Shalm's druids are the most militant in defense of nature and the balance. They have been compared to a druidic version of the followers of Pholtus.

Beory and Ehlonna have both Dedicated Druids and other types of Priests in their service. Relations between druids and conventional Priests can be tense at times.

Beory's druids are the backbone of her church because their hierarchy makes them more organized than other Priests in Beory's service. This is still not saying much. Beory's druids are fatalistic and see contemplating the balance as more important than establishing or maintaining it. They are slow to react to threats.

Ehlonna's druids are a minority among her Priests. As a result racial differences among druids are set aside in favor of greater service to Ehlonna. Druids in Ehlonna's service are human and demi-human and their hierarchy is completely integrated. In this respect, Ehlonna's druids are a shining example of racial harmony and they are very effective in dealing with differing races and other druidic groups. Ehlonna's druids often serve as intermediaries and arbitrator's of disputes.

Subj: Druids – Wendigo
95-03-03 00:14:43 EST
From: Qsamantha

Wendigo are druids who have communed too deeply with nature, losing their sense of humanity. They become possessed by the wild ferocity of nature. They become feral.

The druid possessed of the spirit of the Wendigo first becomes subject to violent mood swings and personality shifts. When the spirit comes upon the druid he or she becomes vicious, spiteful and quick to take offense. Violence often follows. When the spirit leaves, the druid will remember nothing of their actions. In this initial stage, it is possible to redeem a Wendigo. If a Remove Curse spell is cast followed by an Atonement spell, the spirit of the Wendigo is cast out.

The second stage begins when the druid possessed of the spirit of the Wendigo first tastes human or demi-human flesh. Now, no redemption is possible. The druid is gone. There is only Wendigo. At this stage the affected druid appears normal and magic will detect nothing wrong. The Wendigo will resume the druid's former life, practicing its cannibalism and other dark rites in secret. Wendigo at this stage are the most dangerous and difficult to detect.

The final stage may develop at any time but great stress, particularly physical violence, often triggers the transformation. When this stage begins, the Wendigo possessing the druid gains a Strength of 18 and maximum hit points for the druid's level. It appears bestial and only remotely human. The Wendigo thinks and acts like an animal. It casts spells instinctively. The Wendigo is possessed of a terrible fury and has no higher reasoning abilities.

At all stages, Wendigo are absolute neutral in alignment and retain full spell use and recovery. They are not evil. They are possessed of the violence of nature. However, they are malignant and cannot be allowed to live for they threaten all life. The druids who serve Obad-Hai claim that Wendigo must be destroyed lest they enter a fourth stage of development. Most other druids dismiss this as The Shalm's paranoia. However, it is interesting to note that a number of the rare appearances of Hierophant level druids have been connected to hunts for third stage Wendigo.

Subj: Non-Human Druids, Intro
95-03-14 14:17:53 EST
From: AraganHOTC

DRUIDS, Humans only?

Nay gentle reader, the subject of Druidical beliefs being the sole province of the human race is a fallacy. Elves, loving their forests, embrace many druidical teachings; as do the Halflings, nestled in their homes within gentle rolling hills. The even the dwarves and gnomes have some druidical beliefs, though these races very seldom raise above even the most rudimentary skills of a druid. Of course there also exist a myriad of other races that hold true to the tenants of druidism; races such as the Satyr's, Dryad's, many Pixies, Centaurs, and on the list could continue.

Let us first examine the druidic beliefs of the dwarves and gnomes. To begin with, these races tend to dwell overmuch upon the riches that can be brought forth from the ground. Gold and gems, silver and jewels, this is the meat that members of these races crave. Most of the priests of these races are clerics; however a few practice the druidic religions. These druids seem a strange fellowship, after all what natural life is found in the caves they inhabit. Upon closer inspection one would note the fungi that grows therein. Many different forms of fungi grow, many harmful such as the dreaded GREEN SLIME or BLACK PUDDING, but many more are beneficial to these subterranean dwellers. The highly nutritious fungi that can be harvested, or even found wild, is used as a food source. The luminescent lichen that can be used as a safe form of light, especially in those caves found near sites of geological activity (i.e. Volcanoes). The prized fungi that the over world mages and alchemists desire. These are but a few examples of the plant life that can be found under the Oerth. Many forms of animal life abound as well. Some lizards, many species of cave fish, rodents and other mammals, all exist in this environment. There also exist some members of the races that prefer to dwell near or on the surface of Oerth. As was stated previously, the druids of these races are severely limited in their skills. Only one dwarf has ever been promoted to the status of a Great Druid, truly a monumental feat when you note that most dwarves spend more time digging then praying. In fact, it is rare that a dwarf ever proceeds beyond Initiate of the 3rd Circle (5th level), why this is, no one knows for sure (in truth it is because dwarven druids only gain 20% of their earned xp (i.e. they lose 80%) after they surpass the 5th level). Gnomes, tending to stay more towards the surface than their cousins, are but little better in skill, reaching the level of the 5th Circle (7th level, thereafter earning only 25% of xp) before seeming to become more interested in their search for gems. No gnome has ever been known to

hold the title of Arch druid (13th level), and if it is possible to reach this status or higher, no one knows. Also it is known that the Druidic studies preclude members of these races from gaining skill as any other profession.

Dwarves-

Normal Progression: 1st-5th Level
Exp. Adj. after 5th Level: -80%
Multi-Class Options - Best Kit(s): None
Single-Class Best Kit(s):
Village Druid

Gnomes-

Normal Progression: 1st-7th Level
Exp. Adj after 7th Level: -75%
Multi-Class Options - Best Kit(s): None
Single-Class Best Kit(s):
Pacifist Druid, Village Druid

Elves, and their Half-Elven cousins, are known to have reached to the highest offices of druidic nature, the office of Hierophant of the Cabal(23rd level-1st Ed./20th level-2nd Ed.). Half-Elves seem to have a less difficult time of progressing in the ranks of the druids (no xp penalties); but the same cannot be said of the full-blooded elves. Elves seem to have trouble accepting everything as a necessary part of the world (as can be noted in the extreme hatred elves have for orcs), and for this reason elves rarely raise beyond the level of Druid (12th Level, after this level Elves only gain 65% of all xp). These races, especially the full elves, have a great penchant for GOODNESS; also their deities are a very jealous lot. Perhaps for these reasons they are able to perform in more than one capacity at a time. There are quite a few none Elves/Half-Elves that have taken their druidic training, and balanced that with the skills of a Ranger. These Ranger/Druids view balance as a fairly necessary thing in the multi-verse, though for the worlds to survive, and for nature to flourish, the forces of good must always hold the higher hand. The world would be a better place if some of the evil humanoids were eliminated, or at least held in low numbers. The first Druid/Rangers followed Corellon Larethian, though now nearly all the elven deities have some Druidic or Druid/Ranger followers. No other elven or half-elven druid, regardless of their other skills, takes these views; they all hold strictly to the beliefs of true-neutrality. Some elves, and half-elves, are of a militant mindset, though do not take the views of the Druid/Rangers. These folk generally become Druid/Warriors(Fighters), and strive to protect the woodlands, and the balance, by use of spells and force of arms. Corellon Larethian, and Solonor Thelandria have followers of this nature. Corellon and Erevan Ilesere also have Druid/Rogue(Thief) followers, though these are a rare sight. With their highly magical nature, many elves learn to mix wizardry with druidism, though in this instance the elf cannot specialize in any particular form of wizardry; thus the Druid/Mage. Druid/Mage's may follow any of the deities of elvenkind but for Erevan Ilesere. Erevan's mischievous nature leaves little room for the more serious of magical pursuits, thus he prefers to use illusion over other magic; it is because the average elf has a hard time grasping the skills of weaving illusions that the Druid/Mage's do not follow this deity. To be certain elves and half-elves can worship other deities, or simply revere nature, but the majority follow the gods of the elven pantheon.

Elves/Half-Elves-

Normal Progression:
Full Elves: 1st-12th Level
Half-Elves: Unlimited
Exp. Adj after 12th Level(Full Elves): -35%
Multi-Class Options - Best Kit(s):
Druid/Ranger - Avenger, Beastfriend, Guardian,
Totemic
Druid/Warrior - Avenger, Guardian, Village
Druid/Rogue - Avenger, Outlaw, Wanderer
Druid/Mage - Adviser, Guardian, Natural
Philosopher, Totemic
Single-Class Best Kit(s):
Adviser, Guardian, Village

Halfling's embrace the druidic principals, though tend to be to much of a wanderer to settle down in one place long enough to become an established member of any given circle. As such, it is the rare halfling that progresses to the title of Druid (they generally stop at level 11, though they may continue, gaining only 45% of all xp earned), though there was at least one Halfling that became a Hierophant. Halflings tend to remain true to the druidic teachings, though some few may also learn the arts of Thievery. Such Druid/Rogues(Thieves) tend to wander about "collecting" things for the Circle of druids that he/she is nearest to at the time. Most Druid/Rogues follow the teachings of Brandobarus, that is if they do not revere Yondalla; however all of the deities of the Halflings do have some of these followers.. A few Halflings, worried about incursions of their lands by beings that destroy the beauty of the hillsides, have begun to form militant orders, these Warrior/Druids are very small in number, and most believe that they will never attain power within a circle, even though they tend to stay near to home. Again all the gods of the Halflings have Druid/Warrior followers, though Arvoreen "The defender" has the greatest following, second only to Yondalla.

Halflings-

Normal Progression: 1st-11th Level

Exp. Adj after 11th Level: -55%

Multi-Class Options - Best Kit(s):

Druid/Warrior - Guardian

Druid/Rogue - Outlaw, Wanderer

Single-Class Best Kit(s):

Village, Wanderer

Of the other races, the Satyr's, Sylph's, Centaur's, and such, I will not go into detail for now. Suffice it to say that these have druidic followers as well. Perhaps another day I will have time to detail these...

BTW: To be sure these notes may not be found within the pages of the tomes outlining these races and the druids. These are notes from my particular Oerth, others spanning the myriad of worlds and realities in the multi-verse may differ from this. Perhaps the different dimensions laws of nature preclude any or all of these from existing. (In other words, it is the DM's choice as to whether to allow any or all of these notes.)

Greyhawk Chronology

Subj: GDQ and T1-4

95-03-09 22:33:44 EST

From: Hrsnash

The giant modules quite clearly happened before the events in T1-4, since the introduction (I think) to the Temple of EE proper refers to the "sharp check" that had been dealt to Lolth on Oerth. Presumably, then, players had already pursued Lolth even to her home in the Demonweb Pits well before the events in the T series ever began. Also, presumably, Lolth escaped destruction, which may have proved tricky for those DMs whose players actually succeeded in slaying the Queen of the Demonweb Pits in that module.

Things start getting even trickier when you begin to wonder what Zugtmoy's status is in Ashes. Was she freed from her prison? Was she banished to her home plane on the Abyss? What about groups who never played or never finished the T1-4 series? What if the forces of Iuz had been decisively whipped in that series? All things considered, as has been observed before, Ashes (or perhaps Greyhawk wars) just rode roughshod over existing campaigns. It was careless, disrespectful, and inconsiderate of TSR to do. In my own campaign, I have just chosen to ignore Ashes, at least until all of the events that are associated with earlier adventures, published modules or my own, are more completely resolved.

Another interesting point--Iggwilv's treasure was discovered before the events in the Isle of the Ape, because in that module Tenser comments that the witch is angry because "her daughter was laid low." So someone had to have not only made it through S4, but had to make it through successfully.

And this leads to another question--what do you do when your players fail?

Subj: Re: GDQ...
95-03-09 23:09:18 EST
From: DM ScottW

Actually, in our real time line the G, D, & Q modules were written many moons ago, and coincided with earlier releases of TWoG, but in no instance can any dates be found referring to the year in which these events take place! Also take into account the complete "Greyhawk Campaign" (T1-4{BTW T1 "The Village of Homlett" was published many years ago and I think this is what you are thinking of Morallon}, S1-4, and GDQ1-7) as TSR began to bill the linking of the 3 supermodules. You must realize a few things about the history of the Flanaess to follow this line of thought. First the events of the players delving into the temple must occur a few years after the Battle of Emridy Meadows wherein the forces of GOOD sacked the Temple and imprisoned Zuggtomoy therein. This battle occurred in the Common Year 569. Further the module must take place after the disappearance of Prince Thrommel, Grand Marshal of Furyondy, Provost of Veluna in the year 573 as he is imprisoned within the Temple Complex. Now if this series is started in the year 573, how long would it take to get the characters to the point where they could begin an assault upon the giants? IMO it would take from 7-10 GAME years(to get to near 8th level). Hmmm.... 573 + (I'll say 8 years) 8 = 581, and the wars began when, 582??? Hmmm.... (Amazing how doing a little math can produce quite a surprise)

So following this line, Lolth, Giants, yep there is a connection there...

Subj: Greyhawk Chronology 1
95-03-10 10:44:45 EST
From: Hrsnash

We now face a very knotty problem of chronology, and I challenge anyone to unravel it, using only the texts as a guide. The Battle of Emridy Meadows occurs in CY 569; presumably, the events of GDQ happened just before that. We are also told that Iuz sought an audience with Zuggtmoy after the Temple had grown pretty powerful. How long did it take the Temple to grow to its full stature? The time frame is not very clear until after a "wicked cleric established a small chapel" (5) in Nulb. Thereafter, we learn, in "three years, a grim and forbidding fortress surrounded the place" (5). In the WoG Guide, under the heading of "Verbobonc," we find that "Prompt action was taken when it became apparent that evil had grown strong" (41). My reading: our wicked cleric builds the chapel in CY 566; three years later the fortress is complete and we have the Battle of Emridy Meadows. At some point in this time frame, Iuz presumably requests an audience with Zuggtmoy.

But as every Greyhawker knows, Iuz was freed from his prison in CY 570, where he had been "trapped" for "many decades" (Guide 27). Was the Iuz who visited the Temple an impostor? The Return of Martin Iuz?

Carl Sargent has tried quite valiantly to set the time line right. In "Iuz the Evil," Sargent dates Iuz's imprisonment to CY 505 (3), and points out that after his release, the Old One was annoyed to find "that the Temple of Elemental Evil he had developed with Zuggtmoy...had been sacked a year beforehand" (3). Which is fine if we assume either that the Temple had grown quite powerful by before CY 505, and that this is when Iuz sought an audience, or that he and Zuggtmoy had been working together for years. Neither interpretation is supported by the text of T1-4. There, we learn that Iuz had requested to see Zuggtmoy only after the "appeal of elemental destruction and demonic aid attracted many malign and twisted creatures to the Temple" (29), which to me is consistent with the earlier statement that after the chapel had been established the "thickets and marshes around Nulb became the lair and hiding place for bandits, brigands, and all sorts of evil men and monsters alike" (5). We are further told that as these men and monsters came, the chapel "grew into a stone temple" (5), while in the later passage we find that as a result of those "malign and twisted creatures" worshipping at the Temple, the complex "grew ever more rapidly" (29). These statements would seem to infer that the growth of the Temple's actual power and the manifestation of that power above ground are intimately connected.

I point this out not for the sake of pedantry itself, but to suggest that, according to the text, the rise of the Temple was relatively quick, and that Iuz asked for an audience with Zuggtmoy sometime after, or while, the "small chapel" was "grew" into a "stone temple" and then "a grim and forbidding fortress" (5). That would have to be sometime between CY 566 and 569 if we are to credit the statement in the Guide to the World of Greyhawk that the forces of good acted "promptly" when "it became apparent that evil had grown strong" (41). It is worth noting here that, in Sargent's work, the forces of good are so ineffectual that it is perfectly possible that Zuggtmoy had grown

strong decades earlier, and that the forces of good were blissfully unaware of any problem until it came up and bit them in the--well, you know.

I can't accept this reading, however, because it does not square with the implication in the text that the "apparent" and "actual" power of the Temple are pretty closely related. Moreover, it is clear to me at least that in order for evil to grow strong it must first pillage and collect above ground. How else are you going to create all the twisty dungeons below the Temple? Even the fanatical servants of evil demonic forces have to eat. No, I think we are stuck with the embarrassing fact that Iuz had sought an audience with Zuggtmoy at the very point that he was trapped in Zagig's dungeons.

My point here is that the modules in Greyhawk were created, not with the idea of making them consistent with a larger setting (particularly the earlier ones), but with the idea of making each one inviting and complete on its own. The "G" series introduced the drow, but it is more than likely that EGG had not yet thought of Lolth very carefully. In the "D" series, he developed Lolth as an interesting villain--and the focus of the adventure shifted. By the time "Q" came out, the fact that Lolth had not been behind the giant invasions to begin with had been forgotten, or maybe overlooked. The setting was reinterpreted as the new modules came out--just as Gygax reinterpreted the dwarf Obmi as a servant of Iuz and Eclavdra as a high priestess of Lolth in the books (which could then be easily justified--Obmi escapes and takes service with the great evil power on Oerth, while Lolth, her Fane destroyed and her home plane invaded, accepts Eclavdra's clone back into the fold).

This means that a DM who wants to use the modules, and who wants consistency as well, will have to do some pretty hefty editing/revision.

On the other hand, it has been my experience that the players don't generally care about the fine points of chronology--that is a disease which afflicts DMs, and as I have tried to suggest, it is in the case of the World of Greyhawk an unresolvable problem.

I do think, however, that a Greyhawk campaign can be run with only a minimum of inconsistency. Start the players out in your own dungeons--when they reach high enough level, try S1 Tomb of Horrors, and then S3 Expedition to the Barrier Peaks. Then move on to the GDQ series. After that players may welcome the opportunity to play at low levels again. T1-4 is ideal for a start. After the players have bested Lolth, they may want to take up Keraptis' challenge in S2 White Plume Mountain, or search for the Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth in S4. At any time, players might like to experience one of the Ex modules, or try their luck at the Unopenable Doors in Mordenkainen's Magnificent Adventure (in which neither Bill nor Ted appear). Likewise, players could move off into the A series after T1-4 (although the encounters will have to be toughened to compensate for higher levels of PCs), or the C modules.

Sometime after the players get really tough, the DM can introduce them to Isle of the Ape, which should cut some of them down to size. Perhaps after the players have developed 3 or 4 different PCs, the DM can encourage them to bring their toughest character to this one.

An alternative sequence would be to do T1-4, S2, S4, S1, S3, GDQ, and finish with Isle of the Ape. There would have to be some chronology and date shifting, but the campaign could be used to reveal the alliance between Iuz, Zuggtmoy, Iggwilv, and Lolth, and thus to prepare for Greyhawk Wars and Ashes if the DM wishes to go in that direction.

Remember that the players do not have to know the precise dates--a little confusion here will increase the mystery. How did Iuz get involved with the Temple of Elemental Evil when he was imprisoned in the dungeons below Greyhawk Castle? Did he show up afterwards, and rally the forces of the broken temple, or did he manage it some other way? Players never have to know; what they will react to is the idea that by sacking the Temple they have made Iuz their enemy--which will, and should, scare them.

It seems to me that further speculation about the time scheme is rather like counting the number of devas who can dance on pinheads.

Subj: Re:Greyhawk Chronology

95-03-10 17:52:05 EST

From: Hrsnash

Actually, I had included the other modules in the next installment which @#\$!! aol did not allow me to put on. Your idea for the progression was a good one, and I suggested that as an alternative to the original order, for DMs who had not yet played the earlier modules.

In my campaign, GDQ was the players' introduction to the Greyhawk setting. We had been playing for some time in adventures of our own design. Then, I found World of Greyhawk and the Giant modules when they were first released. Everyone got new characters, suitably advanced in level, and we ran the G series. After that, we did the D

modules, which ended up in the Great Fane as something of a draw rather than a resounding defeat of the demon Queen. Around that time, I also found the Village of Hommlet, ran my players through it, and then waited for the sequel. And waited. And waited. Meantime, I had been doing side trek adventures to keep the Greyhawk game on its feet. By the time T1-4 came out, all my players had already been through S2, S3, S4, WG4, and S1, and so were far too powerful to run en masse through the Temple. Then, my interest turned to Keoland proper, and back to adventures of my own design, with the result that in my campaign, Lareth and his followers have been slain, but the Temple remains undisturbed. (We never ran the A modules, and as I explained, my players never broke through to Lolth's home plane, so we never got to Q either).

My suggested sequence for a classical campaign is to begin with adventures of one's own design, then to move on, when levels are sufficiently advanced, to S3 Expedition to the Barrier Peaks. After that, the players should be ready for GDQ. Once levels seem to top out, the DM can start players fresh in T1-4, after which S2 White Plume Mountain and S4-WG4 might be challenging. From that point, the EX modules, and S1 Tomb of Horrors and Mordenkainen and Yrag's Way Cool Adventure would be excellent "challenge" games, breaking up the tedium of an epic adventure with great side jaunts. I'm not sure what I'd do with the A series; possibly an alternate route after T1-4. Then there are the C modules, which can also be played as side treks or one offs.

Once players have characters they feel are powerful enough to take anything, they might visit the Isle of the Ape....

I think your alternate sequence makes sense as well, with T1-4 starting the whole campaign, and GDQ as a climax and lead in to Ashes. The only question I have in this case is this: What if the players in that game are more successful than mine? What if they trash Lolth? Does the DM just scrap Ashes?

I still think the major changes in any campaign ought to be directly related to the actions of the players; in Ashes they are not. Regardless of the many games in which the giants and the drow were all decisively whipped, the alliance still threatened the western states enough to allow Iuz to move against Central Flanaess. At that point, the players might begin to ask what they had been doing in the first place.

On the other hand, if GDQ is used post-Ashes, then I could see some potential for it as a counter-strike against the giant incursions chronicled in the Ashes set. But then, you would need to find players who had never run GDQ, and those are pretty rare.

In my own campaign, alas, this is not to be. I played the modules, roughly, in order of their appearance, so I was faced with the Ashes set parading an invasion that my players had stopped years before. This was just too much deus ex machina for me, and so I have ignored Ashes in my own campaign, using only parts of it to help with the very subtle expansion of Iuz. In my campaign, the style is usually this--the players fight an evil being; the evil being is allied with or connected to Iuz (and Iuz has stacked the deck so that he wins no matter what happens); the evil being loses; the players get more treasure and experience; Iuz grows--bit by bit.

Subj: Re:Greyhawk Chronology
95-03-11 10:56:49 EST
From: BrettE1

I have been following this discussion very closely and find it quite fascinating!

I am currently DMing a party in WoG. The sequence I used was this: T1-4, A1-4, G1-3, Expedition to the Barrier Peaks, D1-3 and now, later this very day, they will be swept to the home plane of Lolth.

Like someone here said, I had to beef up the A1-2 modules, to compensate for the higher levels of the party. But it worked out pretty well. I had also sent them on the Expedition...Barrier Peaks to give them neat artifacts to have when they went into the D series. So, of course, they sold almost everything once they completed that adventure. However, the party's Mage had kept a Blaster Pistol, which turned out to be very handy in the final confrontation with Eclavdra in D3. Also in D3, I committed a small crime by borrowing from the Menzoberranzan Boxed Set to spruce up the Drow city.

What comes after Q1? Well, I have selected Tomb of Horrors, Isle of the Ape, and Vecna Lives. But I'm not sure what sequence of those three adventures I should use. Any suggestions?

Subj: Re:Greyhawk Chronology
95-03-11 11:33:08 EST
From: BluSponge

Not to burst everyone's bubble - because many of you have made good points on the subject - but I don't seem to recall dates from *any* of the old TSR modules (A's, G's, D's, S's, etc.) so there is nothing in doctrine that says these events have happened yet.

Can no one else see the urgency in a campaign run around GDQ1 in a post-war setting? Searching out the evil factions that have overrun Sterich and Geoff, and finding all winding up to Lloth's plane? I think it could be amazing. The slavers adventure would work just as well.

You would, of course, have to alter some of the background notes for these scenarios, but I think they would be otherwise incredible.

If you don't believe me, consider St. Cuthbert's return within the TEE to confront Iuz for the first time since the wars - we're taking BIG climax now!

Subj: No dates in the modules
95-03-11 13:37:00 EST
From: Hrsnash

No, there aren't any dates given. But there have been clues in the sections of the texts as I have pointed out, and two dates--the Battle of Emridy Meadows and the Release of Iuz--are given quite clearly in the Guide the Greyhawk (and in the earlier set as well).

Moreover, of all the published modules, S1 appears to be the oldest. It was first used at Origins I (in 1975 I think?), followed by S3 at Origins II (in 1976). The G series was used at Origins '78, and the D series at GenCon XI. Module publication was different; the G series, the D series, and S1 all appeared in 1978. The next year, T1 "The Village of Hommllet" appeared, as well as S2 "White Plume Mountain" (which I believe was released earlier than T1). S3, the second oldest scenario to be conceived, was not released until the year after that (1980). The sequel to T1 didn't come out until 1985; and it was there that the cryptic comment about Zugtmoy hearing of the "sharp check that had been dealt to Lolth" appeared. Since WoG had already appeared, complete with the "official" date of Emridy Meadows and Iuz's release, it doesn't take a genius to see how the designers (presumably with EGG in charge) were attempting to schematize the time line at that point. Their main concern was probably GD and T1-4, as the S modules could all be played at any time. So while the modules do not give any "dates," T1-4 is the most critical text in terms of its attempt to put the modules into relation. This is as close to an official Gygax chronology as you are going to get.

This is not to say that DMs cannot (or should not) try to rearrange the chronology as best suits them. In fact, my post makes clear the flaw of the chronology proposed by Gygax-Mentzer in T1-4, as well as the problem of Sargent's chronology in "Iuz the Evil." But if you are looking for an "official" chronology based on the evidence in the available texts, those are the only two chronologies available (I don't think Sargent attempts to correlate T1-4 with GDQ as Mentzer and Gygax did, but I may be mistaken).

So the fact is that there are, essentially, dates given in modules--if you are diligent enough to look for them. On the other hand, such diligence is not well rewarded, as the dates themselves are unworkable (and they are unworkable, again, because when TSR first began producing Greyhawk material, they did not think in terms of a chronological consistency to the whole campaign world--that has been a fairly recent development).

We are still left, then, with the need to do the work on our own. Moreover, there is no way on the planes that the dates of Emridy Meadows and Iuz's release can ever be satisfactorily reconciled given the info we get about Iuz's relation to the Temple in T1-4.

My suggestion? Don't worry. Be happy. If you want to establish a date for something, find something more or less datable, like the Dead Sea Scrolls.

***** End of Best of Greyhawk #1 *****