



Volume 2, Issue #1

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Editorial: Musings on the Oerth - To Sail Beyond The Sunset.

Hail and Fair Greetings Greyhawkers and Oerth journalists!

Welcome to the first issue of the Oerth Journal Volume 2. I will keep this short (or at least try to), but as some of you may fear, there will be a little poetry at the end.

First I want to say thanks. Thanks for all the help, the contributions of material, the time and the assistance. Thanks for the chance to try my hand.

Next I want to ask for more help. The Oerth Journal needs You! Feedback will let the Oerth Journal become more of what you want it to be, so please email! But the Journal also needs material. The best way to see the type of material that you want to have included in the Journal, is to write it and send it in. Please do. Already the 2nd issue is under construction, but only as a sketchy outline.

At the end of this issue you will find the brief introduction to an adventure. This is a small preview of issue #2. (A preview within a preview). Each change of season, Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter, there will be a preview released of the upcoming issue. March 20th for issue #1, June 21st, the first day of Summer, for issue #2... This way, anyone who wants, can see the barebones and unfinished skeleton of what is to come, and perhaps take a hand in its final shaping before the actual release.

Read and let me know what you think, what you'd like to see and, hopefully, what you would like to include of your own work.

Thanks again, this work has been a pleasure. I hope that you enjoy reading the Oerth Journal as much as I have enjoyed editing it.

Jason Zavoda

"Tis not too late to seek a newer world.

Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.

It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,

And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.

Though much is taken, much abides; and though
We are not now that strength which in old days

Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are
One equal temper of heroic hearts,

Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

Lines 58-73, *Ulysses*

by Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Thus Spake Gary Gygax: Ye Secrets of Oerth Revealed

by Paul J. Stormberg

Over the last few years, prior to 2000's fifth coming of the World of Greyhawk, the GreyTalk email list has thumped its collective head on several conundrums presented by the original setting. During that time I was fortunate enough to have exchanged several emails with E. Gary Gygax, the creator of the World of Greyhawk. The emails were essentially questionnaires, each having a list of Greyhawk conundrums for Gary to solve. After a short search through his old notes or a trip down memory lane, Gary would promptly and considerately email me a list of answers.

The results, found hereafter are essential reading for those true students of Greyhawk. Even the most sagacious Greyhawkers will find many useful tidbits for their campaigns. So without further ado, here are the fruits of those email questionnaires. All answers, found hereafter, are given by the Savant Sage himself. Text in bold indicates my line of questioning and the italic Author's Notes identify my observations and comments on Gary's answers.

The following questions deal mainly with the *World of Greyhawk* campaign setting 1979 folio and 1983 boxed set, *EX1 Dungeonland*, *S3 Expedition to the Barrier Peaks*, *T1 The Village of Hommler*, *T1-4 Temple of Elemental Evil*, *WG4 Forgotten Temple of Tharizdun*, and finally Gary's TSR and non-TSR Gord the Rogue novels set in the World of Greyhawk. While there are more recent editions of the setting, many of these conundrums have gone unanswered. Until now.

Q: Recorded calendars aside, which human or demihuman race has dwelled in the Flanaess the longest?

A: The Flan. No question. Then the demi-humans started "appearing" after some time, a few centuries.

[PJS] Author's Note: In the original Greyhawk folio the timeline states "461 [CY]... Demihuman realms of Ulek and Celene are effected". In its erudite usage this essentially indicates they were "brought about by some means." In later editions the overzealous editors thought this a mistake and changed it to the mundane "affected," taking the proper meaning out of the timeline entry and leaving the reader to ask, "Affected by what?"

Q: In a few places throughout the Greyhawk materials, Zagyg is mentioned as having imprisoned nine demigods beneath his Castle Greyhawk. Who were these nine demigods? (The following are per Rob Kuntz's notes; do you concur?):

- #1 Celestian the Far Wanderer
- #2 Erythnul the Many
- #3 Heironeous the Invincible
- #4 Hextor the Herald of Hell
- #5 Iuz the Old
- #6 Obad-hai the Shalm
- #7 Olidammara the Laughing Rogue
- #8 Ralishaz the Unlooked-For
- #9 Trithereon the Summoner

A: Yes, Rob is on target.

Q: Some of these deities listed are not demigods in later products. Did they get elevated in status upon escaping?

A: As to their demigod status, there is some "literary license" there, and the term should not be regarded as following the rules book in regard to classification of deities.

Q: Why did Zagyg originally imprison them?

A: Because he could! Actually, the idea was that from time to time one or another of the named deities "crossed" the Mad Archmage, or asked some favor, and in return Zagyg confined each in a special prison. Of course, he, and they, knew it to be a temporary matter, and that release was forthcoming through some heroic or anti-heroic activity, as it were. (It was a prop for adventuring, of course.)

Q: Are the following deities from the Gord the Rogue novels pseudonyms for the published gods of Greyhawk?

Arachne
Gigantos
Hewd
Infestix
Kabak
Keogh
Murlon
St. Trowbane
Proctor Chronos
Lady Tolerance

A: They are as follows:

Arachne Lolth
Gigantos Zagyg
Hewd Heward
Infestix Nerull
Kabak Boccob
Keogh Keoghtom
Murlon Murlynd
St. Trowbane St. Cuthbert
Proctor Chronos *
Lady Tolerance *

*Although there are parallels, both "new" deities were meant to be more remote and more powerful by far than Lakofka's treatment of Lendor, and the goddess Istus.

Q: Some people have lumped the Elder Elemental God (EEG) and Tharizdun together. My perspective is that they are distinct beings. Would you clarify their relationship, or lack thereof?

A: I meant no relationship between the two. The Elder Elemental God I saw as a dark creative deity, one that spun form out of chaos in his portion of one universe, then lost control of his creation--as is the story with so many deities of this sort in the mythology of various peoples of earth, from Babylonian and Egyptian on. Tharizdun is a larger and more pervasive force that is multiversal but not omnipresent. That is what he sought, of course, along with omnipotence. Tharizdun failed on both accounts.

Q: In G1-3 Against the Giants you describe the symbol for the EEG as follows: "...a wall of glossy purple stone, with an amber-like inlay of a huge inverted triangle with a Y enclosed within it and touching the sides of the triangle." Do you mean "...touching the vertices of the triangle.", thus dividing the inverted triangle into 3 smaller, equal triangles?

A: You have it right. The Y-shape in the triangle rises and thus make a shape akin to that when looking down on a three-sided pyramid. That is the symbol called an "eye of fire" - although a certain artist didn't pay attention...

[PJS] Author's Note: Zugtmoy's "Eye of Fire" symbol found in T1-4 is an artistic error. Gary is indicating that the Eye of Fire symbol was supposed to be the same as the EEG's, i.e., an inverted triangle enclosing a "Y." The symbol, as erroneously drawn in T1-4, is an eye with the upper lash aflame, although, it is plausible that Zugtmoy could have used a play on imagery to avoid complications with the true EEG's.

Yet another bit regarding the Eye of Fire, is that it appears as a rune for "DRAGON, EVIL WATCHER" in the 1979 World of Greyhawk folio. This rune, along with many others, disappears from the runes and glyphs of the 1983 World of Greyhawk boxed set. Note that the silvery-runed doorways (Diagram 10, pg. 39) within the Temple of Elemental Evil can not be fully translated unless the 1979 folio version of the symbols is used!

Q: Is there any relationship between *The Temple of Elemental Evil* (ToEE) and the Elder Elemental God? (T1-4 indicates no relation whatsoever, but according to your above comment on the Eye of Fire symbol, it appears she was blatantly using the EEG's symbol, or a parody of it, as part of her ruse-religion to draw evil beings into her service.)

A: You have sussed out a dark secret! The EEG was indeed meant by me to have a place in the very nethermost recesses of the ToEE. An anomaly there allowed him to manifest a portion of himself, and by doing the wrong (right from the DM's point of view) thing the adventurers could release him also! Of course that would counter somewhat the freeing of Zugtmoy, had she been loosed, so on balance it could serve to redress that error. But, alas, I was too busy with other things at the time when the project was being completed. As it was already quite hefty, I decided to omit any mention of this to Frank Mentzer, and so the ToEE was released with only the Eye of Fire as a clue to what I should have included in the adventure.

Q: Tharizdun is one of the most enigmatic deities in Greyhawk. Even in module WG4 *Forgotten Temple of Tharizdun* more mystery is created than dispelled. Is Tharizdun a primordial deity? How would you characterize this deity's aspects?

A: Tharizdun was indeed a primordial deity, that of matter at rest and decay of energy, viz. entropy. In WG4 he was presented as a dark and vaguely threatening "something," and the four aspects were to make the reader/player uncertain of what Tharizdun boded were he ever released.

In the Gord yarns, his release was deemed to be complete, so the worst and most terrible of Tharizdun's forms could come into full power and attack thus. I wish to point out that all that he did is



not as it seems, for an obvious reason I won't go into unless I ever get around to authoring an eighth tale in the epic of Gord. I do have some number of other projects ahead of that, but the springboard and conclusion of such a work are pretty well set in mind right now.

Q: What is Tharizdun's holy symbol (black sun with variegated rays or inverted ziggurat)? In WG4 the ziggurat appears on the robes of the priesthood in mauve on black or black on mauve. The black sun with variegated rays is found painted on the wall of the High Priests' crypt next to a silver limned figure of black - possibly Tharizdun himself?

A: The black sun with variegated rays is the symbol for Tharizdun (free), while the inverted ziggurat is that used to show that although Tharizdun was bound, the work of those who did so would be overturned. The silver limned figure of black is indeed an image of Tharizdun.

Q: What is Graz'zt's unholy symbol (you mention that it is made of basalt in the Gord books but nothing about its shape)?

A: Graz'zt's unholy symbol of basalt? Hmmm. I really don't recall it exactly. I think I had it as a pincer-like pair of tongs, but I am not absolutely certain, for it has been some years since I have DMed anything where that demon came into play.

Q: Which deity did you intend the Archcleric Hazen of Veluna to worship (in T1 *Village of Hommlet* you mention that he sponsors the construction of St. Cuthbert's chapel therein)?

A: And there you have it! Plain as day, and likely as you assumed. He of the Cudgel is indeed the one venerated by the Worshipful Hazen.

[PJS] Author's Note: Rao is now the official deity of Hazen as per Sargent's treatment in From the Ashes.

Q: In the 1983 boxed set you list the leader of Ket, Beygraf Zoltan (dual-classed cleric/fighter) as the Shield of the “True Faith” and his nation’s dominant alignment as Neutral. What “True Faith” would that be?

A: One that I never had the opportunity to elucidate. That was to come, but... in short, the deities for the folk there were to be other than those enumerated by me.

Q: Also in the 1983 boxed set, the religion in the Caliphate of Ekbir is even more curious. There the leader is Caliph Xargun (cleric) and the dominant alignment is LG and NG. This is quite a departure from normal Baklunish neutrality. What deity do these people worship? Some have suggested Heironeous as the best fit. Did you intend it that way?

A: As noted above, I had planned a different pantheon for the Baklunish, but I never got around to detailing it. Should the majority be satisfied with the deities as presented, then indeed I would agree that Heironeous is a logical choice for the chief deity of the Caliphate of Ekbir.

The reason I wished to include another pantheon is, of course, obvious, for lacking even the common ground of a shared pantheon, the friction would be greater between these peoples and the east.

In both the 1979 folio and 1983 boxed set, the descriptions of the Suloise-Bakluni wars mention two events that are a bit foggy, namely, the Suel Invoked Devastation (ID) and the Baklunish Rain of Colorless Fire (RoCF).

Q: What was the nature of the Invoked Devastation? In the *Monster Manual II*, under the hordling description, you wrote: “The only known method of drawing more than 1 hordling to the Prime Material Plane is the bringer of doom, a strange device created by arcane magic during the Invoked Devastation and now lost.”

A: No! Hordlings were not a feature of the Invoked Devastation. The Bringer of Doom was a minor artifact from the age, by the way.

Q: The Rain of Colorless Fire’s effects are detailed by you in the 1983 *World of Greyhawk* boxed set and earlier folio:

“...in return for the terrible magical attack [the Invoked Devastation], the Suloise lands were inundated by a nearly invisible fiery rain which killed all creatures it struck, burned all living things, ignited the landscape with colorless flame, and burned the very hills themselves into ash.”

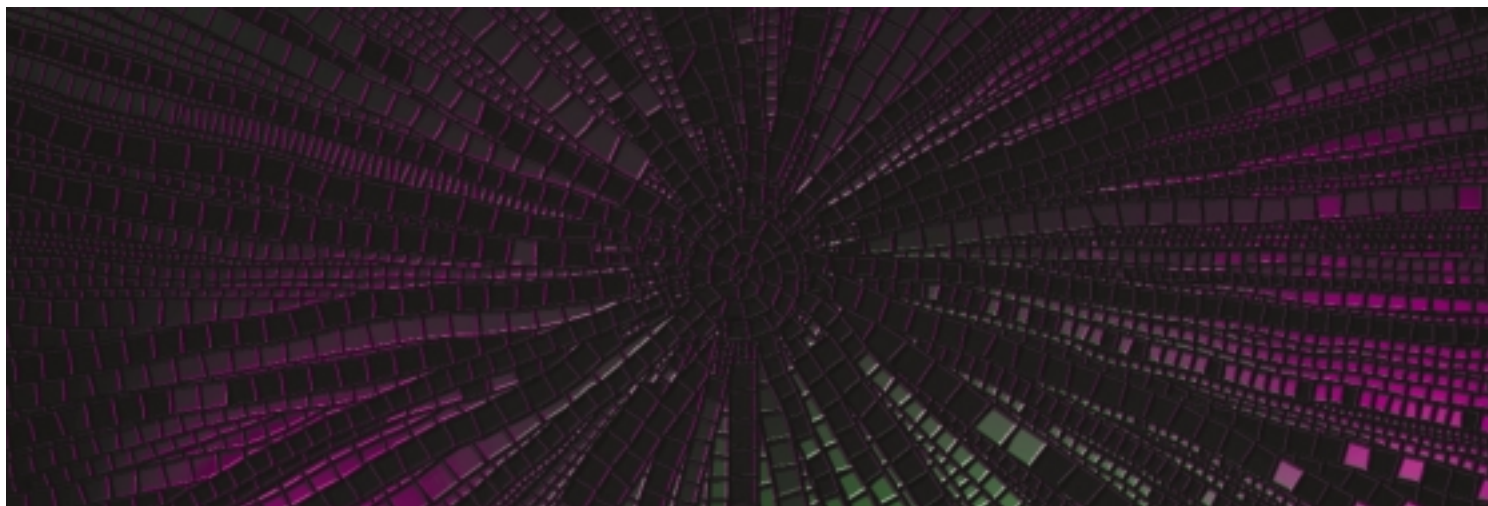
The Invoked Devastation, on the other hand, is a little more vague - are its effects a massive, instantaneous disintegration? Or is it a rapid erosion, crumbling the Baklunish Empire in a sudden sweep of time - an unmaking of things? Are there ruins left behind? Dead bodies? What are the effects on the landscape?

A: Here we have it, a very sound guess, all of which are correct, as I envisioned the effect. A wave of something sweeps over the land. Buildings begin to crumble as if being powdered by an oerthquake, only the ground is not shaking. All living things within the area are sickened. Although some survive, most others are less fortunate. The wind is black and howling, and under its strange force the work of the hands of man decays as if time were running a thousand times faster for such non-living matter. Living things suffer increased aging, but not so severely. Trees grow suddenly, deplete their soil, and die. Animals age and die. Children become adults, but, lacking the nutrients for growth, die. A handful of the young adult folk escape as near- and middle-aged wrecks. The remains of the dead are visible for some period, but the habitations are naught but powder and dirt. It is a desolate place that only time will restore. In a score of years, though, the whole is covered by weeds and struggling plants, and slowly, as the bacteria and worms and insects make their way into the soil, the land becomes a wilderness that can support normal life again.

Q: What was the nature of the Rain of Colorless Fire (the 1983 *WoG* boxed set only says “...in return for the terrible magical attack [ID], the Suloise lands were inundated by a nearly invisible fiery rain which killed all creatures it struck, burned all living things, ignited the landscape with colorless flame, and burned the very hills themselves into ash.”)?

A: It, the Rain of Colorless Fire, was, as the Invoked Devastation, a magic of incredible power, absolutely lost to Oerth - and especially to all NPCs and PCs alike.

So to all wondering about those mighty magical powers, forget them!!!



Q: Who were the casters and what type of spell, device, effects, etc. were employed? If a group of PC's were caught in the RoCF trying to intervene what would their chances be?

A: If the PCs are to be there, they can kiss their "lives" goodbye. What happened was a release of power akin to what a major god would employ, like one making land of sea.

The deity involved in this exchange, one Dorgha Torgu, paid dearly for his meddling with such unnatural power. I had written up this deity in my notes but had never entered him into the rolls of Greyhawk gods; that was for later.

Dorgha Torgu

(Outcast of the Gods)

GREATER POWER (fallen, now a QUASI-POWER)

Racial Origin: Baklunish

Areas of Control: Material Dimensions, Material Elements

Alignment: N(G)

Plane: Prime Material (Oerth)

Sex: Male

It is said that Dorgha Torgu is the outcast of the deities of Oerth. This is because he is the one from whom came the Rain of Colorless Fire upon the Suloise Empire, thus violating both his Neutrality and his charge. While the Invoked Devastation of the Suel was wrought through the vilest of the Evil powers, the counter response was unjust despite provocation. Swayed by the evil counsel of Vilp-akf'cho Rentaq, that alien thing which is called an Elder Elemental God, Dorgha Torgu bent dimensions and loosed unnatural elements in his charge so as to precipitate upon the Suel realm the near-invisible and unquenchable flames that consumed the land, burning even rock to powdery ash.

Shunned now by all deities not of malign bent, Dorgha Torgu, the Outcast of the Gods, wanders his domain in remorse. Torn between anger at his treatment, which he feels is unjust, and remorse, this deity seeks some means of rebuking his peers even while proving himself as worthy in their eyes. Despite the blandishments of those of Evil nature, Dorgha Torgu has not turned to them. Clearly he regrets listening to the Elder Elemental God long ago, and is wise enough to understand that to follow Evil now would simply confirm the judgment of those who have made him a pariah. Thus, Dorgha Torgu is also rejected by those gods and goddesses of malign sort. He is indeed a true outcast.

Acknowledged and venerated by Baklunish "purists" (for reasons now distasteful in the extreme to him) and a handful of other savants who are aware of the circumstances, Dorgha Torgu is no longer able to wield vast powers. He is now a mere quasi-god with powers akin to those of a Cleric--Magic-User--Paladin of 18th level each (with the ability to move into the material dimensions and the surrounding plane, compound elements to form things thus, and, of course, to assume mortal form at will). Brought low thus through his own error and the judgment of his peers, Dorgha Torgu roams about, often in material form, vainly looking for that which will redeem him in the eyes of the Greater Gods. As with all things, there is a means by which the outcast can restore his lost reputation, but he must manage the matter without assistance from any of deital sort. In mortal guise, this deity can assume any form -- male or female, young or old, handsome or ugly, and so forth.

When in human guise, however, Dorgha Torgu has abilities of

diminished sort, even from his relatively lowly quasi-deity status. (As an aside, it is thought that this is because he has the secret backing of Istus, who would see her fellow restored to his place if Dorgha Torgu can earn such. It is speculated that the opportunity to make amends for his offense will come only when he in such weakened state.) Thus, Dorgha Torgu has but mortal powers, albeit considerable ones, and can not, of course, be truly slain but merely destroyed in material form and sent to his own demi-plane for a time for recuperation.

Dorgha Torgu as a mortal has the combined abilities of a Cleric and a Paladin. He may opt to have the former at 12th level ability and the latter at 8th level, or vice versa. In either case he can also use each of the following spells twice per day: *Dimension Door*, *Passwall*, *Rock to Mud*, *Teleport*, *Wall of Stone*.

In roaming through the world, Dorgha Torgu helps those who seek to reverse evil things, to aid those who have been wronged, and to otherwise help those suffering injustices. This he does from remorse, not because he believes such a course will restore him to his lost status. Of course, it is surely some such humble act that will set him on the course of attaining that which he seeks.

Q: Which of these characters from the classic G1-3 and D1-3 tournament rosters are male and which are female? (the illustrations from D1-2 *Descent into the Depths of the Earth* suggest at least one of them might be female -- a fighter type -- likely females: Beek, Fonkin, and Ycore)

Beek Gwenders of Croodle	half-elf	ranger
Cloyer Bulse the Magsman	human	thief
Darg Blonke	grey elf	fighter
Faffle Dwe'o-mercraeft	human	magic-user
Fage the Kexy	grey elf	cleric
Flerd Trantle	human	cleric
Fnast Dringle	wood elf	fighter/magic-user
Fonkin Hoddypeak	high elf	fighter/magic-user
Frush O'Suggill	human	fighter
Gleep Wulp the Eybiter	human	magic-user
Keak Breedbate of Nithe	gnome	fighter/thief
Philotomy Jurament	human	paladin
Redmod Duple	dwarf	fighter
Roaky Swerked	human	cleric
Shab Heanling	half-elf	thief
Ycore Rixle	grey elf	fighter/magic-user

A: None, actually. That was a liberty taken by the artist.

In the Gord books, Keak appears as an elf, actually.

Q: In module WG6 *Isle of the Ape* your presentation of one of the pre-rolled characters, Reynard (Reynardia) Yargrove, the Druidess of Obad-hai, strongly suggest that she is homosexual. However, the shoddy editing of that section in particular, plus the artwork in the module, seem to suggest that "she" was originally written as a he. Is this the case?

A: You have it absolutely correct. Reynard was written as a male druid.

The illustrator did indeed do things properly, showing Reynard as he was supposed to look.

[PJS] Author's note: As popular as this favored bit of GH lore is, the above reply and the following evidence should dispel any further delusions about it. The editing of the pre-rolled PC section of WG6 Isle of the Ape is, regrettably, less than par. Indeed, no editor is even given in the credits. It can be noted that "Reynard Yargrove" is given as "her" name in bold large print, then in small print and parenthetically "(Reynardia)" is found inexplicably stuck in at the top of her statistical description. This noticeably departs from the other character description layouts. Further, Gary has used Reynard previously as a male name in his Greyhawk's World articles in The Dragon. Also, in Reynard's statistical section she is referred to as a druidess twice, yet she is referred to as the "druid of Obad-hai" in Rowena's Character Relationships section.

The whole "Does not want the druid of Obad-hai near her" under Rowena's description is merely a play on the animosity between worshippers of Ehlonna (Rowena) and Obad-hai (Reynard). The "strangely attracted to Rowena" under Reynard's description is a heterosexual, love-hate, opposites attract, sort of roleplaying set-up akin to a worshipper of St. Cuthbert falling in love with a worshipper of Pholtus.

Finally, we have the illustrations throughout the module, always showing four main characters: a large male fighter (Franz obviously), a shorter rogue-like fellow (Rakehell Chert obviously), a male magic-user (Agath by process of elimination although in this case the two don't match physically other than both are male magi-users), and a male druid (the missing Reynard?).

This was likely a late, botched edit, possibly to increase the female population of the adventurers. Indeed, it is probable that the character descriptions were edited by, gasp, a female. Penny Petticord to be exact. She receives "Special Thanks" in the credits.

Q: In module EX1 *Dungeonland* you have the "shingle" for Murlynd's home as "DR. MURLYND, F.K.O., M.L.G.T.S.A." What do those degrees or titles translate to? (My guess is Former Knight Oerth, Member Lake Geneva Tactical Studies Association)

A: Fellow of the Khans of the Orient (our local SAC for a time), and you are on target with the rest.

Q: Do you have your design notes on the Mystic or Mountebank for the planned new edition of AD&D back in the 80's? (I loved the Mountebank character Hop in the Gord the Rogue books)

A: Yes, but they are forever sealed away according to legal agreement with TSR and its heirs and assigns.

Q: When I played in a D&D game you ran set in Castle Greyhawk I played a priest of Pholtus. When I introduced my character, Nodee Gristomb, you sang "O Blinding Light", the hymn/anthem of the Pholtus faithful. What are the words to "O Blinding Light"?

A: Few indeed: "O Blinding Light, O light that blinds, I cannot see, look out for me!" It is a steal from a Firesign Theater recording, "Don't Crush that Dwarf, Hand Me the Pliers."

Q: Rob Kuntz once told me Otto would sing a little ditty at the Green Dragon Inn called "Otto is My Name and Magic is My Game." What are the words to that song?

A: That's it. You have them. He would also add, "Otto spelled backwards is Otto, but inside out it's Toot!"

Q: Any other classic ditties from your Greyhawk campaign?

A: In punishment for crimes against nature, Melf was commanded to rise before dawn each morning for a year, frolic merrily at dawn singing:

"When the sun in the morning peeps over the hill and caresses the rosebuds on my windowsill, my heart fills with gladness when I hear the trill, of the birds in the treetops around any old hill. Tra-la-la, fiddle-dee-dee-dee it gives me a pain, to dance and sing this, must I do it again? Tra-la-la, fiddle-dee-dee-dee there's penance to do, how happy I'll be when it's finally through!"

[PJS] Author's Note: The author laughed milk out his nose when he read this reply.

Q: In an early *Dragon* magazine you mention that Mordenkainen lead his cavalry forces to the Far West to succor a friend in need. Who was this friend and what was the result? (Obviously, Mordenkainen ultimately settled in the West, building his Obsidian Citadel in the Yatils.)

A: It was to assist Robilar who was being assailed by LG forces. The lads drove them off handily with minimal losses.

Actually, Mordie's place was not in the Yatils, by the way, but rather close to the Horned Society lands.

Q: In T1-4 *Temple of Elemental Evil*, Prince Thrommel, lawful good, is allowed access to Fragarach, a chaotic good sword of answering. The description of the sword indicates the Prince, not chaotically aligned, would be seriously harmed were he to grasp the sword. Was this simply an editorial blunder or a last jape by his kidnappers? If an error, was it the name of the sword or its alignment that was incorrect?

A: It was an editorial error. The sword should have been designated as LG.

Q: Who were Prince Thrommel's kidnappers?

A: The Scarlet Brotherhood enacted the deed but they were in the employ of Nyrond.

Q: In the introduction to module S3 *Expedition to the Barrier Peaks*, Owen III is listed as the ruler of the Grand Duchy of Geoff. This contradicts the '83 Glossary which lists Owen I. Does the module then take place in the future during Owen III's reign or does it take place during the reign of Owen I, c. CY 576?

A: It was an editorial oversight. The module was to take place during the current timeline, i.e. during the reign of Owen I, c. CY 576.

Q: Is the crashed spaceship in S3 Expedition to the Barrier Peaks the Starship Warden from Metamorphosis Alpha?

A: No. The size and the technology in this vehicle should make such speculation quite misplaced, in fact. The downed space ship is far too small, and its science quite different from that of the famed starship Warden. (As an aside, I still play several characters who adventure in that environment whenever Jim Ward is running a game, I do my best to be there ready to play!)

The starship Warden is huge in size, complex in its many different levels, and it is a place where nothing is static, save perhaps some of the Pure Strain Humans in cryogenic storage.

Q: In module C1 Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan there is a clue that indicates the crashed spaceship in S3 Expedition to the Barrier Peaks may be the Warden II?

A: The downed spacecraft wasn't really the Warden II either. Sorry. That [the obscure clue in module C1 by Harold Johnson and Jeff R. Leason] was somebody else writing, not me. The crashed space vessel was more like that dealt with in a SF book - whose title and author I have forgotten, but whose mutated inhabitants collected "ponics." (I think the name of the book was Starship, but I am not sure.)

[PJS] Author's Note: The book is Starship by Brian W. Aldiss, published in 1959. It is Aldiss' first novel and was released first in the U.K. as Non-Stop and later in the U.S. as Starship. The latter title, of course, gives away the best part of the book, one of the likely inspirations for Jim Ward's Metamorphosis Alpha in 1976.

Greyhawk Gods

An ancillary result of the Q&A sessions was the creation of the Greyhawk Gods sourcebook for the author's own campaign. With Gary's collaboration, a manuscript was put together detailing the creation stories for each pantheon and describing over 168 deities associated with or unique to the World of Greyhawk setting. One such entry, directly related to the lines of questioning above, is provided hereafter. Perhaps, if there is interest in such a product, the whole manuscript will one day find its way to the printed page.

While *Monster Mythology* has a general treatment of an Elder Elemental God, the following is a description of the EEG specific to Oerth, much like Ghaunadaur is a specific description of an EEG on Toril (*FOR2 Drow of the Underdark*). The priesthood presented here is more balanced than the *Monster Mythology* version, being much less powerful and in accordance to the rules for specialty priests found in *PO: Spells and Magic*.

Elder Elemental God (Rentaq)

GREATER POWER

Racial Origin: Unknown

Areas of Control: Chaos, Creation, Power, Prowess, Horror

Alignment: CE

Plane: Prime Material (Oerth; unknown alternate universe previously)

Sex: Male

In its true form, Vilp-akf'cho Rentaq appears as a huge, squid-like creature having ten hairy tentacles and being mottled with various

shades and tints of purple and violet. In this form it has a single golden eye that turns a fiery red-orange when the being is aroused.

One of three Elder Elemental Gods¹ (EEG), Vilp-akf'cho Rentaq is a dark, creative deity that had spun form out of chaos in its portion of one universe and then lost control of it. Weakened and reduced to using its true form, the EEG fled to Oerth, hiding itself within the eternal darkness of Tharizdun's reign. When Pelor first shone and drove out Tharizdun, the EEG skulked into the dark recesses of Unoerth (the underground world of Oerth) where it slowly regained its powers.

Over time the EEG drew the attention of evil giants, establishing a cult that sacrificed to the EEG. As the centuries passed, small groups of other races served as both worshippers and sacrifices to the EEG. Eventually, an enclave of ancient Flannae discovered the EEG's existence. These foolish few² began to worship the alien being and were soon sacrificing to it. Discovering this corruption of her children, Beory became enraged. With matronly fury she smote the evil god with her powerful staff, instantly changing the EEG into a column of stone. She followed this with a second terrible blow that reduced the column to rubble.

All that remained of the EEG were chunks of cloudy, translucent, mauve and red stone. In some shards shapeless forms of purple, yellow, and green swayed and danced, in others horrible, mauve-splotched, hairy tentacles writhed, and in one a huge fiery-orange eye burned with hatred and vengeance.

Beory swept away these evil fragments and hid them away in the darkest recesses of Oerth. There she hoped they would remain hidden from her children forever. Such were the past eons. Now a few depraved enclaves have discovered some of these shards and are making it their mission to find more.

In fact, the EEG was not destroyed but entrapped by Beory's blow. As a result the deity is crippled and can only access the Prime Material plane through these fragments. It greatly desires to be freed.

It is unknowable what the EEG's true area of control is. What is known, is that the deity provides personal power and prowess to those evil humans, drow, and evil giants that sacrifice to it.

Temples and shrines are built around shards of the EEG. These shards are scattered throughout Unoerth, in subterranean caves, labyrinths, and rifts. Most are hidden beneath mountain ranges, deep gorges, and oceanic abysses. It is in these places that the depraved worshippers of the EEG may be found.

Central to these unwholesome temples are one or more shards of the EEG, sometimes forming the very altar or walls of the place. The sense of unease and insecurity within the temple is great. Weird symbols and engravings fill the area, along with silver chimes, black metal inverted triangles, and gongs. The whole is typically lit by fat black candles that spit and sputter with a ghastly purple light.

Garrison of Urnst, a dilettante archaeologist-sage with an interest in the occult, led an expedition to one such temple beneath the hall of King Snurre Ironbelly. Here is an excerpt from his journal prior to his sudden disappearance in CY 589:

"The very air of this weird place is illuminated by eddies of swirling luminosity, rusty purple motes and lavender rays, while globs of mauve and violet seep and slide

around. Columns of serpentine, malachite, and obsidian line the place and are carved with runes, symbols, and sigils that stare from their positions and shift when one's back is turned. The vaulted ceiling of the temple is beyond the range of normal illumination, some 60' or so in height, its recesses are hidden in the blackest of shadow. At the far end of the chamber is a three-tiered dais, behind which is a wall of glossy, purple stone with an amber-like inlay of a huge inverted triangle having a Y enclosed within that touches the vertices of the triangle. The first tier of the dais is fashioned from black stone shot through with veins of violet. Upon this tier rests a rack of silver chimes and a large drum of a chitinous black material with a black skin stretched over it. The second tier is of a dark gray stone with specks of lilac, orange, and purple. Upon this step is an altar block of dull, porous-looking, somewhat rusty black mineral. On either side rests a verdigris-bronze brazier. Placed outside of these are three, tri-branched candelabras of verdigris-bronze, arranged in a triangular pattern pointing to the other end of the temple. Each branch is fixed with a single, fat black candle that burns with a flame of deep glowing purple and leaping lavender. The third and final tier is cut from a dull black stone with whorls of plum and lavender and splotches of red. This final tier is empty save for a black metal, inverted triangle suspended by chains from the ceiling above."



Worship involves sacrifice of sentient beings. Sometimes this even includes the worshippers and priests of the EEG's themselves. Specific rituals are enacted with a complicated combination of chimes, gongs, triangles, and the touching of certain sigils and glyphs. These ceremonies are known to temporarily bring forth a portion of the EEG, from nearby shards, to claim its sacrifices and provide rewards and punishments. The rewards are incredible powers and the punishments are certain destruction.

1 Vilp-akf'cho Rentaq is but one of three EEG's. Ghaunadaur is another and there is yet a third, unnamed EEG. All three share the inverted triangle symbol and the same true form. All are dark creative deities who thrive in the elemental chaos of primordial universes. Although never together, depictions always show them as a trio, typically being worshipped by numerous sentient creatures of many different worlds and universes. It is thought that this is merely symbolic and that it is a representation of the beings across temporal, spatial, and other dimensions. Nonetheless, there is a definite unity in the triumvirate beings. Indeed, the inverted triangle symbol used to represent them is one triangle made-up of three equal triangles.

2 It is speculated that these initial worshippers may have included the ancient wizards Galap-Dreidel, Keraptis, and possibly the Wizard Priest of the Isles of Woe.

Elder Elemental God's Priests

The primary drive and motivation for these priests is personal power and prowess. To gain these, priests seek to locate shards of the EEG and raise or restore temples around them. They are well aware of the unpredictable and violent nature of the EEG and make frequent sacrifices to keep it appeased.

Members of the priesthood choose either a minor knowledge of all elemental spheres or focus on one elemental sphere in particular.

The hierarchy of the priesthood is utterly cruel in its lust for power, with those who fail becoming sacrifices. Rank among this wicked lot is determined by individual power and prowess.

Requirements: AB Wis 9; AL CE; AR any; WP any non-edged; SH any; RA lesser priests (9th and lower): black under-ropes, mauve cassocks, and caps and sashes of black with mauve embroidering, high priests (10th level and above): mauve, black, and plum, stitched with gold and set with 10 violet garnets, 10 topazes, 10 black opals, and 10 oriental amethysts; BDY none; SY "The Eye of Fire," an amber inverted triangle enclosing a Y that touches its vertices, thus dividing the triangle into three smaller equal triangles, the whole being set on a field of purple; SP All, Astral, Chaos, Creation (rev), Divination, Elemental (must choose major access to one or have minor access to all four), Guardian, Healing (rev), Necromantic (rev); ADD faerie fire, obscurement; RES none; SPL wall of tentacles (P5); PW 1) immunity to insanity causing attacks or magic, 3) radiate unease and insecurity, 5' radius - all opponent morale checks at -2, 5) enfeeblement (W2), 7) fear (W4), 12) conjure air/earth/fire/water elemental (priests with minor access to all elemental spheres may summon a 12 HD earth/air/fire/water elemental; priests with major access to one elemental sphere may summon a 16 HD elemental of that sphere); TU command; XP cleric.

NOTE: SH = shield allowance, BDY = bodily alterations, SY = religious symbol, ADD = additional allowed spells, RES = additional restricted spells, XP = experience point table used.

Spells and Magic Items of the Elder Elemental God

Wall of Tentacles (Evocation)
 Sphere: Creation/Guardian
 Priesthood: Elder Elemental Gods
 Level: 5 Range: 1 yards/level
 Components: V, S, M
 Duration: permanent
 Casting Time: 1 turn
 Area of Effect: 10 square feet/level
 Saving Throw: n/a

This powerful spell brings into being, what appears to be, a wall of rough, brown-purple stone. In fact, it is a living wall, having 20 tentacles and 2 octopus-like beaks for every 100 square feet. If anyone touches the wall, it will writhe to life as a 10 HD monster and attempt to entwine the creature and begin clacking its beaks and hissing.

If attacked, the wall is AC -2 and each 100 square foot section requires 200 hp to bring down. The tentacles have a 20' reach, attacking as a 10 HD monster and inflicting 1-20 hp of damage. As many as 4 tentacles may strike a single target at the same time. If a single tentacle successfully strikes an opponent, that individual will be drawn toward one of the beaks. The beaks may strike at any such opponent as a 10 HD monster, inflicting 1-10 hp of damage on a successful attack.

The wall is susceptible only to magic weapons and the following spells and items: disintegrate (destroys 100 hp of the wall's strength), dispel magic (destroys 50 hp of the wall's strength), or symbol (persuasion, allows cleric of wall-caster's alignment to safely pass through). Of course, the caster may part the wall to conduct themselves and others safely through. Similarly, possession and forceful presentation of a ring of lesser or greater tentacle rod command (c.f.) allows safe passage if the cleric wearing the ring makes a successful turn attempt vs. special (at -2 levels for the ring of lesser tentacle rod command).

Greater Tentacle Rod (C)

This dreadful item is a gray rod, 4' in length, with a glistening, greasy looking surface. The upper half of the rod appears to be carved with 6 tightly intertwined, violet tentacles. Upon command by a cleric wearing a ring of greater tentacle rod command, the carved tentacles come to life, slithering apart and writhing. The rod may then be commanded to strike one opponent up to 6 times/round as a 6 HD monster with a +6 to attack rolls. A successful hit by a tentacle does 6 hp of damage. If 3 tentacles hit in a single round, that opponent is numbed and will strike at -4 on attack rolls for the next 3 melee rounds. If 6 tentacles hit in a single round, that opponent will strike at -4 on attack rolls for the next 6 melee rounds and permanently lose 1 point of dexterity.

1st, Lesser Tentacle Rod (C)

This dreadful item is a gray rod, 4' in length, with a glistening, greasy looking surface. The upper half of the rod appears to be carved with 3 tightly intertwined, purple tentacles. Upon command by a cleric wearing a ring of lesser tentacle rod command, the carved tentacles come to life, slithering apart and writhing. The rod may then be commanded to strike one opponent

up to 3 times/round as a 3 HD monster with a +3 to attack rolls. A successful hit by a tentacle does 3 hp of damage. If 3 tentacles hit in a single round, the rod causes double damage and will slow the opponent for 9 rounds.

2nd, Lesser Tentacle Rod (C)

This dreadful item is a gray rod, 4' in length, with a glistening, greasy looking surface. The upper half of the rod appears to be carved with 3 tightly intertwined, reddish-purple tentacles. Upon command by a cleric wearing a ring of lesser tentacle rod command, the carved tentacles come to life, slithering apart and writhing. The rod may then be commanded to strike one opponent up to 3 times/round as a 3 HD monster with a +3 to attack rolls. A successful hit by a tentacle does 3 hp of damage. If 3 tentacles hit in a single round, the rod will inflict double damage and will make the opponents right or left arm weak and useless for 9 rounds.

Ring of Greater Tentacle Rod Command (C)

This ring is of carved amber and set with an amethyst. It allows the user to control a greater tentacle rod or a lesser one. The ring also confers immunity to the effects of a lesser tentacle rods and forceful presentation of the ring allows safe passage through a wall of tentacles (c.f.) if the cleric wearing it makes a successful turn attempt vs. special. The ring radiates magic if detected for but is otherwise unaligned.

Ring of Lesser Tentacle Rod Command (C)

This ring is of carved hematite and has a weird graven rune carved upon it. It allows the user to control only a lesser tentacle rods. Forceful presentation of the ring allows safe passage through a wall of tentacles (c.f.) if the cleric wearing it makes a successful turn attempt vs. special as a cleric of two levels lower. The ring radiates magic if detected for but is otherwise unaligned.

Omnipotent views

(20th of Readying, 590): Citadel of Steel

by Richard Di Ioia

A training yard in the castle complex known as the Citadel of Steel. A dozen men train with various weapons and different techniques. This training complex is the most intricate of any on Oerth and caters to the tastes of the greatest fighters in the world.

The Citadel is owned and ruled by the Guild of Crex Tulkus (Old Oeridian for Glorious Battle). The Grandmaster of Melee stands on a balcony overlooking the yard below. Silent thoughts of the history and purpose of the Citadel fill his mind.

The Citadel was created hundreds of years ago as a sanctuary for warriors from the capricious nature of mages. The guild was created

as a gathering of powerful warriors to exchange stories and to teach new skills. Over the years the guild recruited many members from the different war torn regions of Flannae. Retired warriors came here for shelter from the world gone mad. Each

century the reasons were different; fiends released, mages becoming power hungry, gods starting holy jihads. It was all the same to these warriors. Many of their friends were lost due to the whims of the leaders who had no concept of what it meant to be in the front lines of battle. So they came here, to the Citadel. To heal, to rest and to renew their faith in themselves and others.

A little under two hundred years ago the Guild began to attract priests of warrior deities. At first they were refused, but a vote was held amongst the greatest warriors of the guild and a decision was made. If the priests could prove that they too had fought and bled in battle and that they had dedicated their life to fighting and stood by their brother warriors, they would be admitted. A trial period lasting 50 years was offered and many priests accepted the test. During that time, the priests showed their mettle. They lived and died alongside the warriors and gained the respect of their guild brothers. When the final vote came, none stood against priests being accepted into the order.

For centuries it has been so, and now the Citadel attracts the brightest and most skilled warriors in the Flannae. It is considered a great honor to be approached with an offer of guildmanship. As the guild grew, so too did the size of the Citadel, so that now it is one of the largest military keeps in the Flannae. It can be argued that only Irongate rivals it for defensive power. With this increase in size and population, the guild divided itself into cells. Each cell representing a certain fighting style. Currently there are 5 Grandmasters who serve the Guildmaster. The Grandmasters are that of Melee, Ranged, Mounted, War, and Priesthoods. Although not all styles are represented by the Grandmasters, those that are not are given under the purvey of a Master who represents that style. The Grandmasters and Masters of each order are chosen as the undisputed best warrior in each of their respective combat styles. The Grandmaster of Priesthoods is changed every five years in deference to the different priesthoods. It is the only order that is not solely based on combat skill. Note that the Grandmaster of the Priesthoods must be the undisputed best warrior in his priesthood.

It has occurred on several occasions that the Grandmaster was not the best warrior in a style, but he was "undisputed". This is a loop hole in the guild rules that is used often to promote a brilliant Grandmaster who may not be the best warrior. It also allows warriors who do not want to be Guildmasters to pass and still be unofficially the best in their style.

But now, there is tension in the wind. The seasoned warriors training below have an edge to them. Something is in the air, and the Guildmaster of Melee really wanted to know what could make such experienced warriors nervous. Whatever it was, it was happening within the higher levels of the Guild, and he was not aware!

Dragon to Elf

by Richard Di Ioia

A golden dragon is in his home talking to a 7' tall elf, Llewelyn. The conversation goes something like this:

D: The great ones awaken.

E: Who are the great ones?

D: In the beginning dragons were the dominant race on Oerth. Serving them were the Elvendar, your ancestors. At one point the dragons grew old and bored of their existence on Oerth. They decided to leave Oerth and visit other planes. To do this they undertook a great spell, a spell that would take centuries to complete, but they had the time. For centuries the dragons ignored the Elvendar and their progression. Finally the day of the great casting came. A gateway to the planes opened up and the dragons looked on it with awe. As they entered the gateway, the spell granted them powers over the plane as well as new perspectives. Some dragons could not bear the thought of leaving Oerth fully behind and continue watching to this day.

E: What do you mean some of the dragons are still watching?

D: Where do you think the gods came from? No Llewelyn, the greater and intermediate gods existed before the dragons were born. The lesser gods you mortals worship include some ascended dragons. Those that ascended were only a small portion of the dragons that departed. Many of the others left Oerth to explore other planes and possibilities. Not all the dragons were powerful enough to pass through the gateway and these stayed behind. The dragons that stayed assumed that life would return to normal. They were wrong. The Elvendar had tasted freedom and did not want to give it up. They rebelled against the dragons and great wars were fought.

E: Not all the Elvendar rebelled, just as not all the dragons fought.

D: No, some chose instead to go elsewhere and live in harmony together. Your ancestors and myself are some of those. But most chose to fight, and the war was cruel. In the end the Elvendar won and the dragons were forced into hiding. But, the price was steep. No longer were the Elvendar what they once were. They had become Elves. Some speculate that this also caused the future schism between the elves and the drow, but that is another discussion. For a millenium they have hid, watched and waited. Finally a new race, humans, replaced the elves as the

dominant race. Helped by hidden dragons, the Suloise threw off the mantle of rulership of the elves. As the empire grew, it evolved into a weapon to destroy the hated elves.

E: That explains why the Suloise turned on the elves and became such enemies.

D: It explains a part. Do not forget that some humans are greedy and power hungry by nature. Even without the influence of dragons they may have attacked the elves anyway. With the elves driven east, dragons were free to procreate again. Humans did not know of us and our ways. They thought us large reptiles with limited intelligence. We slowly grew in power and our influence increased.

E: What stopped you?

D: The same thing that stopped the Suloise Empire. The twin cataclysms of The Rain of Colorless Fire and the Invoked Devastation also decimated us. The oldest and most powerful dragons survived and went back into hiding. Some of the lucky dragons born during the Suloise Empire days survived. But most were killed. They did not go into hiding and have been active all this time. It has been half a millenium since that time. Now, the great ones awaken once more and we must do battle once again.

Wintershiven, a traveler's memoir

by Issak "The Pale" Haywood.

I recently visited the most religiously intolerant yet fascinating place on Oerth. It happened by chance, as I traveled through the Bandit Kingdoms, on my way to the Great Kingdom. Lacy, a Legate in the Church of the One True Path, saved me from a wild pack of wolves. I had seen in her a dedication to Pholtus, and immediately was drawn to her and her faith. Hoping to learn more about this One True Path that she followed, I traveled with her on her missions of faith. After a few seasons, our travels led us to Wintershiven, the capital of the Pale. It was Sunsebb, the snow was in abundance and I quickly understood how Wintershiven had received its name. Of course, some would argue that this Wintershiven received its name from the former capital, also named Wintershiven, which had been located some twenty miles to the south. Of course the original Wintershiven had been burned down by the Nyrondeese during their hostile occupation. I, on the other hand, believe that its name is due to the land being cold, hard and unyielding, just like the citizens that I met while visiting in the city. The city officials and common folk are extremely strict on foreigners, especially towards those that worship false gods. This, I think, is because the Supreme Prelate, Theocrat Ogon Tillit, sits on the Throne of the Sun, and the Council of Nine regularly meets here.

Upon entering within the city limits, but well outside the protection of the sturdy stonewalls of the Citadel, many places of interest can be found. This holy and religious city seems to have a temple, chapel or shrine to Pholtus almost every 10 feet. Many of these are wonderful, and all are dedicated solely to Pholtus, so that his glory will shine on all within the Pale. On Glory Road, which probably relates to the Glory of Pholtus, as it seems that all roads and areas of importance relate to Pholtus in some way, a very eye-catching temple is made of red brick and has a tall brick tower attached. This tower burned down 45 years ago, and its bell and church coat of arms were almost destroyed, and are now preserved in the Hall of the Oratory Path.

Other places of interest outside the Citadel include the Farmers Market, a place where the merchants gather early every morning, to sell their wares and goods. Occasionally, when in season, fresh fish caught from the Yol River stink up the market place, but luckily, during my visit it was not the season for such stench. As one traveling with a member of the Church Militant, I was lucky enough to be able to stay at The Resting Sun Tavern, just outside the Citadels Dawn Gate. My close connection to Lacy did not subside the staring glares I received from many of the gathered legates, as Church members frequent this place. Lacy introduced me to many legates, clergymen, and others involved with the Church. I met Asiria, assistant to Anonsis the Bishop of Wintershiven. She conveyed many rumors about the city and the Church of the One True Path. One such rumor regarded Anonsis, who lost his Prelate of Rakervale title when he was demoted, to Bishop of Wintershiven, for his ultra conservative views. Rumors tell of an argument that got out of hand while he was visiting the Elves of the Phostwood, where he struck a visiting dignitary of Tenh. From her, I also learned that some holy relics belonging to Talavir, a Nyrondeese priest, had been recovered. The serving

wench, Kinnora, insisted that she was a surviving member of his family and that these relics belonged to her and her lineage. Of course, due to the intolerant nature of this land, these rumors are not common knowledge.

For those coming to Wintershiven as a traveler or merchant, I would recommend staying at the Barrel & Board Inn and Tavern. It lies outside the Citadel, but many merchants find this to be a comfortable and well-protected place to stay and leave their wagons and merchandise before the next day's market opens. For those more concerned with their coin, I suggest staying at the Light Bringer Inn, for its inexpensive accommodations will keep you warm at night, as well as coin in your pocket. While out visiting the city, if thirst and hunger strike, I urge you to stop by The Citadel Tavern. The fine Light Ale that is produced specifically for them has a wonderful hearty taste, and the roasted bison is easily washed down. However, due to the expensive nature of this tavern, and noble nature that is presented within, many dignitaries, law enforcement officials and those blessed with financial reward can often be found here. Just do as I did and be on your best behavior.

Because many pilgrims make their life-changing voyage to Wintershiven, the Pilgrims' Rest Rooming House outside Noon Gate is dedicated solely to them. This house is three stories high and has 45 rooms. Each of these rooms is situated to temporarily house a small family while they are visiting.

The Prelatel Army barracks, City Watch guardhouse, and City Jail are all located just outside Dawn Gate, and I warn you to hold your tongue, as the members of the watch will likely arrest you for blasphemy if a whispered criticism against Pholtus is heard. Also located in this general area is a place for single men. The unmistakable scent of sex and active pheromones can be felt in the air, as well as the gentle brush against your arm by the beautiful and scantily clothed women. Although prostitution is legal within the Pale, it must be mentioned that it is so only for those that are unmarried. For married men, please recall that adultery is a sin in the eyes of the Church and can get you a stay in the New Dawn Camps.

Not far from the barracks and guardhouse, the sounds of steel being pounded out can be heard. Jay Swordwright is undoubtedly the most skilled masterwork weaponsmith in Wintershiven, if not the Pale. Many members of the military and those heroes in the Church's service have weapons made and repaired here, for a reasonable price. His reputation is powerful; Theocrat Ogon Tillit had him commission a special steel staff with intricate filigree for his inauguration.

Prior to arriving through one of the three gates into Wintershiven proper, known as the Citadel, one must first pass through the Pilgrims Chapels, paying homage to Pholtus, under a glaring eye of the Church Militant. Here you will receive a special red badge, showing that you are a pilgrim. These badges must be worn openly, and a deposit of 3 Gold Glories must be paid. Of course citizens of Wintershiven have badges as well, but theirs is white, and there is no deposit required for them. I do suggest that one of these chapels is visited almost immediately, as the City Watch may harass you if

you are not openly wearing a badge. The Church Militant most certainly will, likely stating, "You should go to the chapel and pay your respects to Pholtus, even if you have no business within the Citadel". The Pilgrims Chapel on Evengate has a significant history, dating back to 465 when Theocrat Hanon had declared all foreigners to be heathens. Fotaub, the Bishop of Wintershiven who was disfigured by a mishandled birth, came to this Chapel and defended those that were here for a Pilgrimage. This forced Hanon to accept incoming followers of the One True Path. Due to Fotaub's disfigurement, his is the only missing picture in the Hall of Officers in Wintershiven's Administration building, however his picture is placed on the southern wall in great prominence. In 501, during a massive winter storm, the chapel became truncated, and had remained that way until the merchant house of Debren renovated it just last spring. Both Noongate and Dawngate have chapels dedicated to pilgrims, but neither is of any historical or artistic significance.

After declaring our taxes and paying the Theocrats Fifth, we traveled Evengate Road towards the Basilica. Lacy explained to me that because both Dawngate and Evengate are so perfectly aligned, again showing the straight Path of Pholtus, that during the Summer Solstice, the morning rays of the sun shine through both gates, passing through the Basilica. The rays strike the stained glass windows, which, I am told, paints a most beautiful picture of Pholtus setting the path for the sun. This picture is most prevalent within the Basilica, but extends out towards the streets from gate to gate. The setting rays of the sun also paints a picture as they do in the morning, but this picture is one of Pholtus setting Luna's path in the sky. Continuing our trip towards Temple Hill, many side roads and alleyways that lead both left and right are clearly visible and well maintained. The most significant road is the

Travelway, a large road that connects to the Dawngate Road. In the center of the Travelway is an old restaurant. The food here is not great, and its prices do not attract attention, but many scholars do visit this old building, and this is typically a meeting place for the Reformed School of Teachers. Of course the Training College is not far, just a few blocks to the left.

Continuing from Dawngate Road to Noongate Road, The Pathway leads to many of the city's guilds. Along The Pathway, I encountered Jeremy, a typical street urchin. He told me stories of Wintershiven, and when I asked about the lack of thieves and bullies harassing the citizens of the city, he informed me that there were no guilds dedicated to such groups of unsavory people within the Pale, as the Church Militant quickly forces them from hiding and puts to the Question all leaders. Jeremy walked with me on this cobblestone road, and pointed out to me the Arcanists' building. It is a very simple building, unlike those in many other countries. The Arcanists have a long tradition within the Pale, but due to their mystical ways they are often misunderstood. Many members actively serve in the Church, as well as the military. This minority does not overshadow the image that most citizens have, however. Jeremy mentioned that most citizens within the Pale see sorcerers as the cause of wars, consorting with demons and generally worshipping false gods. Thus, arcanists' are usually avoided and

ALTHOUGH PROSTITUTION IS LEGAL WITHIN THE PALE, IT MUST BE MENTIONED THAT IT IS SO ONLY FOR THOSE THAT ARE UNMARRIED. FOR MARRIED MEN, PLEASE RECALL THAT ADULTERY IS A SIN IN THE EYES OF THE CHURCH AND CAN GET YOU A STAY IN THE NEW DAWN CAMPS.

mistrusted by the general populace. When the noonday bells rang, Jeremy ran off, but directed me to the Merchants Guild, which lies in an L shaped warehouse style building. Many wagons and guards stood in the general vicinity, awaiting cargo and orders. The Pale requires all merchants to be members of the guild, especially those from distant nations. This maintains the Church's tight hold on taxes as well as contraband. Another basic principle the Church enforces upon the merchants is one of notice. All merchants must show the standard of their respective nation, so that all Palish citizens know whom they are dealing with, as everybody knows that all Nyrondeuse merchants are crooks and out to steal your hard earned coin.

To the east and bordered by a wall, including parts of the Citadel itself, lies the Cemetery of Heroes. This is the most important non-temple area within Wintershiven, and only those authorized may enter it. However, on the 5th of every month, with the exception of Fireseek, pilgrims and others wishing to pay homage to the past Heroes of the Church may do so. This cemetery was consecrated shortly after "new" Wintershiven was founded. All the previous Theocrats, as well as most of the Prelates, are buried here. The most impressive mausoleum, located in the center of the cemetery, was moved from Hawkburgh. Ceril the Relentless is entombed within. The cemetery was expanded during and shortly after the War in Tenh, due to the many fine and brave soldiers that perished during the Siege of Atherstone as well as the other military campaigns that took place.

Following any of the three gate roads, you will soon find yourself on Temple Hill. This area is covered with elaborately designed cobblestones showing the richness that is afforded to those that follow the strict path of Pholtus. This area handles all Church and political related business within the Pale. Many ambassadors, and other high dignitaries can be "bumped into" in this crowded area. The Basilica dominates the area with its huge size and its dark basalt construction. Michale Pereh was the original architect, and his design was so grandiose that the newly restored town could not afford its construction. Jonathan Thelner later calculated a way to build the beautiful church, using the previous foundation but adding in its current design. This proved to be far more attractive as well as easier to implement. High above the Wintershiven skyline, its rayed sun spire is visible several miles outside city limits, especially during a sunny day, as the highly polished gold and large centered faceted gemstone glare out to all within sight. The Church, not wanting unbelievers near, has a continual light spell cast upon it, showing Pholtus's dedication to the Pale even in the wee hours of the night. Of course, not being one to taken to thoughts of thievery, I was none-the-less informed of its magical protections. I will not go into those details. However, let it be known that this is the symbol of Pholtus within the Pale, and it is extremely well guarded and taken care of. The Church Militant is only one such group that would put to the Question anyone with such fancy thoughts of theft. The Prelate Palace sits within the shadow of the Basilica, and in many of the other cities that I have visited, would be considered the most impressive building within. This is the home to "the Chosen of Pholtus", the Supreme Prelate, Theocrat Ogon Tillit. From within he sits on the Throne of the Sun, in splendid magnificence, from which he governs all the faithful in the Pale, with Pholtus' blessing. When the Council of Nine has its regular meetings, many of the visiting Prelates stay within, that is if they do not own homes within the Citadel themselves. I had the fortunate opportunity to meet with Sarynn Reddick, the Prelate of

Wintershiven. He informed me that due to the cold winters the Council very rarely meets from autumn to spring.

Off to the northwest from the Basilica are the Council Chambers. From here the Council of Nine meets to discuss the Church as well as the nation as a whole. Many heated debates can be overheard in the vicinity during their sessions. The Council is split five to four for the conservatives, but they do come together for the betterment of the nation and the church. With this in mind, they act to support the Theocrat in his governance over the realm. Looking down from Temple Hill, the headquarters of the Church Militant demand purity of faith. From here, all members of the Church Militant receive their orders and Cardinal-Commander Reifus "the Paganhammer" demands a rigid adherence to the scriptures. Of course I did not wish to instigate an investigation into my own practices, and thus did not request a meeting, but I was assured that the High Legate would be willing to meet with any member of the flock at his earliest convenience. Directly across from the headquarters lies the Hall of Spiritual Justice. This is where those who are in contempt of the scriptures await their trial. Of course, only those that have offended the scriptures or the church must worry about being asked the Question, or face the possibility of a Midnight Raid. Most who have disobeyed an ecclesiastical law are rewarded with a stay at a New Dawn Camp. Only the most serious offenders need worry about being burned at the stake.

I spent a wonderful four months in Wintershiven, all of which was made possible because a few wolves attacked me and Lacy dispatched them. After my full conversion to Pholtus, Lacy and I married. We now travel the lands of the heathens, and our latest have lead us to Rel Mord, capital of Nyronde. I can now understand the differences between these two nations, as well as the people. The citizens of the Pale are a harsh people, strong in their belief in Pholtus as they follow his strict path believing that they are the chosen of his flock. While Rel Mord is a city of distinction, with many sages, artisans and other people of prestige, there still exists a debauchery here that Wintershiven would never accept within its boundary. This fact alone does not make it a valuable place to visit or live, but if you're a faithful of Pholtus, and don't mind hard work, harsh winters, and want a nice place to raise your family in faith, it is the best place to be.

Nassi Tol'li, Traveler of the Hanaaw

Sources:

WG8 *Fate of Istus*, "Wintershiven" by Nigel Findley *Living Greyhawk Gazetteer* by Gary Hoolian, Erik Mona, Fred Weining, and Sean Reynolds. *Living Greyhawk Module*, "Holy Word" by Catie Martolin. *Living Greyhawk Historical Interactive* "The Tenh Campaign" Summation by Brian Hancock.

Omnipotent Views:

Dwarven Fire Mage

by Richard Di Ioia

Standing on the edge of a mountainous range are two dwarves. One is wearing the robes of an accomplished Master Mage of the Element of Fire. The other is obviously his apprentice. They are looking over what appears to be the beginning construction of a small city. The city itself is located between the mountains and a large forest in the valley. The builders are a mix of elves and dwarves, long thought to be bitter enemies.

“Explain to me again apprentice Kontar why this is a good thing.” said the master mage.

“Master? You explained it to me before we left our mountain stronghold to come here.”

“Humor me, I want to hear it from another’s lips to decide if it still makes sense.”

“Well, as you explained to me, the new race is slowly expanding into the mountains of our ancestors. They have already overthrown their elven masters and have no regard for the value of lives. Up until the last century, they were a scattered race of many small clans with no concept of civilization or intelligence.”

“I did not say they were not intelligent, just barbaric and backward.”

“Forgive me master. As always, we traded with them for food and hides in exchange for our metal worked goods. They were a better trading partner than the elves with their cold eyes and condescending attitudes.”

“Condescending elves. You would think they won the war and not us. If not for the intervention of the High Lords they would no longer exist as a people. But that is a tale for another time, continue with the telling of this tale.”

“Of course. One human clan allied themselves with the elves and learned the rudiments of elven magic. The clan called themselves the Suel, named after the first elven mage who taught them. Over time they learned to be arrogant and cruel, just like their elven tutors. When the elves grew weak from their civil war, the Suel struck at the citadels of power in the West. These Suel took from the elves what magic items they could use to further their conquests. The elves fled East and once the civil war was over, they closed off the passes to humans. Thus it has stood for centuries as the elven magic has been too powerful for the humans to beat.”

“But something has changed.”

“Yes, the humans have grown bold and powerful. Too powerful, too quickly. Something or someone is teaching them. Ancient magics, powerful spells and long lost items of power are being found. The humans have also begun to treat all non-humans as expendable. It is said they use humanoids in their armies and dwarves as slaves in their forges.”

“And that is why we are here; to build a fortress, to withstand the humans, and finally to strike back at them. It enrages me that we need the help of these weakling elves. Where were they when the tunnels of Troth Agnon crumbled and killed thousands of our people? Safe in their forest, on the other side of our mountains.

Bah, I will build my tower in this city and learn what magics I can from these elves. But I will count the years until this war is over so that I no longer need to share the air they breathe.”

Thus was constructed Liskon in the western realm of Geoff. All that stands of that great city is one red tower. The tower of one dwarven Master of Fire magics...

Follow the money.

by Richard Di Ioia

The monk threw open the window shutters of his room. As he did so, the din of dozens of voices hawking their wares became audible. The monk smiled and let the noises surround him as he tried to make out the different voices and place a face to the voice. There was Pulin, the carpenter, trying to sell that brand new table he was working on last night. He could faintly make out the voice of Alkamabar, the jeweler, negotiating the sale of a ruby pendant. Shame on him, he was asking twice the going rate - probably trying to fleece a foreigner or an adventurer with some new funds in his pouch. The monk would have to talk to Alkamabar about that when he did his rounds this afternoon.

“No time for this musing.” thought the monk. “I have a busy day planned. Now let’s see what I should be wearing for this meeting”. The monk walked across his opulent room and into his large walk-in closet. Mumbling to himself, the monk looked over his choices.

THIS ONE IS TOO RICH FOR THEM, THEY ARE ONLY MINOR NOBILITY AND WOULD BE ANGERED BY A MERCHANT OUTDRESSING THEM.

“Hmm, let’s pass over the commoner clothing, I want to make a good impression on these two. This one is too rich for them, they are only minor nobility and would be angered by a merchant outdressing them. Ah, here we go, this one is perfect.” After getting

dressed, the monk prepared his satchel. He filled the satchel with a few blank scrolls, some writing implements, his seal of Zilchus as well as some scrolls to be used for reference.

Looking at himself in the mirror, the monk’s thoughts churned and tumbled back in time. For the past 32 years he had been a faithful servant of Zilchus. Today would be another day in a long list of successful agreements he has brokered between nobles and merchants. Although not the most important deal he had ever helped to put together, this one was nonetheless important. “Well, it took me a few months to put these two together but I am certain they will both be happy with the outcome. Just to make sure, I’ll stop by the temple and ask the High Priest for a blessing to help me out with this deal. I also think it is the time for me to find myself a wife and start a family. I need to get out of this habit of talking to myself”. With a final look around his room and making sure he had everything he would need, the monk picked up his satchel. “Now I am ready for a good meal”. And with those words he left his room and descended into the inn’s main room.

After a hearty breakfast, the monk walked over to the Temple of Zilchus for a quick prayer. The temple was opulent, but not overwhelmingly so. Several comfortable looking wooden pews were lined up in rows down the center of the temple facing a large altar. The rest of the temple was decorated with great taste with many small alcoves along the walls covered by curtains decorated with

different themes. Standing behind the altar was the High Priest of Zilchus, busy preparing himself for another day. Turning at the sound of the monk entering the church, the High Priest broke into a youthful smile and walked over.

“Brother Edward, so good to see you. Are you looking for a blessing on a deal or did you come just to talk about old times?”

“Mostly the blessing Father. I would have thought you had enough of hearing my talking when I instructed you when you were an acolyte.”

“I always enjoyed your lectures on Zilchus, Brother Edward. They were some of my most memorable moments of my training.”

“I am certain they were. Just not enough to convince you to become a monk instead of a priest I see.” Brother Edward smiled as he said these last words.

“The fear of competing against the great Brother Edward turned me away from service as a monk and forced me to become a priest. Even 15 years ago your reputation as a merchant was incredible. But come, we can boast about your successes some other time. Kneel and I will give you your blessing so that you can increase your reputation once again.” Brother Edward knelt in front of the priest and received the blessing of Zilchus.

After Brother Edward stood, the High Priest spoke again. “Would you like me to ask a paladin to join you for this deal?”

“Yes please Father. There will be a substantial amount of funds being entrusted to my care. I am certain the two parties will be bringing their own guardsmen, but having Brother Likmund of Zilchus guarding me would put me at ease.”

An hour later we find Brother Edward and Brother Likmund seated in an expensive inn sharing a meal. Brother Likmund had already inspected the inn, while Brother Edward ordered their meal, and deemed it safe for the meeting. The other patrons are either known to Brother Edward or spoken for by the innkeeper. As both Brother Edward and Brother Likmund had used this same inn for several other meetings they were not too concerned about the security issue. Once the meeting time approached, Brother Likmund donned his chain mail armor, rested his morningstar on his shoulder and took his position standing behind Brother Edward.

The two parties involved in the negotiations entered a short time later and joined Brother Edward at the table. After a prayer to Zilchus, Brother Edward took out a parchment and began to outline what each party had originally agreed to.

Ye Auld Neblin: Or How to Say Hotfoot in Gnomish

by Paul J Stormberg and Dr. Margana Eman, F.K.O., M.L.G.T.S.A.

One of the greatest slights to the Noniz (gnomes) of the Eastern Flanaess has been the utter disregard of their contributions to sagely taxonomy. It is well known that the various demihuman and human races of the Eastern Flanaess are referred to with distinctive racial names throughout sagely writings: Buheer, Celbit, Dwur, Eiger, Euroz, High Jebline, Hobniz, Jebli, Kell, Noblink, Noniz, Nonuz, Olve, and Svirfneblin. This taxonomy is entrenched throughout the texts and history of the region and even makes its way into the spoken common. The greatest sages and elders of this age and past have employed these names without attribution. It is time to give credit where credit is due: to the Noniz of the Eastern Flanaess¹.

How did this taxonomic system of Neblin (gnomish) come into popular usage amongst scholars? It appears to have first come into usage about 5069-5079 SD during the earliest migrations into the Eastern Flanaess. With the turmoil and competition amidst the admixing, migrating races, taxonomy for newly discovered species was as various as the races an cultural groups that discovered them. Those sagely interactions about such topics were confused, as there was no common taxonomy for the vast wealth of new discoveries. A standard sagely taxonomy was required but no one race was willing to give up their claim of new discoveries to the language of another. Thus, no taxonomy was ever agreed upon. That is, until the Oerid's migration carried them into the demesne of the Yatils.

It was in a small place known as Thunonizvelo “The Gnome Vale.” Secreted deep in the Yatils, a tribe of Oerids encountered the peaceful noniz denizens of this place. Among the Oerids was a sage by the name of Margana. She found the Neblin language to be simple and flexible enough to create an endless supply of new words and descriptive names. Perfect for use as a common scholarly taxonomic language.

Sample Common to Neblin Phrases

Who are you? <i>Whe eer yelu?</i>	Where is the temple? <i>Whureo is thuo tonplo?</i>
What are you doing here? <i>Whet eer yelu delij hureo?</i>	How many gold pieces? <i>Hew naly jit pioozos?</i>
What do you want? <i>Whet de yelu walt?</i>	It will be twenty gold pieces. <i>It will bo twonty jit pioozos?</i>
What is your name? <i>Whet is yelur neno?</i>	Hello. <i>Hulle.</i>
Do you speak Gnomish? <i>Del yelu speenk Neblin?</i>	Goodbye. <i>Jeedbyo.</i>
Do you speak Common? <i>Del yelu speenk Ozommen?</i>	Thankyou. <i>Thalcyelu.</i>
My name is ... <i>Ny neno is ...</i>	Vutuers Burijat (Futures Bright), Paul

Margana spent years promoting and codifying the usage of this “third party” language in scholarly works. Unfortunately, the gnomish attribution fell by the wayside and was lost. So too has some of the taxonomic system’s integrity been lost.

Various, and erroneously, attributed to the Flannae and Oerids, Neblin taxonomy has also been muted and mangled by various authors. In some works “Kell” is used to name gnolls, in others, “Nonuz” is used. Both are partly correct, but the original root should be Nell. In yet another erroneous treatise, the sage Craft Eragans names tribes of orcs seemingly at random, using various humanoid names from Neblin taxonomy.

This article seeks to end this scholarly backsliding and to give due attribution to the Noniz for their contribution in shaping the understanding of the Eastern Flanaess. Below is a Common to Neblin translator and small dictionary of commonly used words. In order to properly use the translator, take the greatest common denominator of the word when seeking the translation, e.g., giant = g = j, i = i, an = al, and t = t, thus giant = jialt in Neblin. In cases, where two possibilities are given use the one that works best.

Welcome to the wonderful language of Neblin. “Jeed luoz!” Oh, and by the way, it’s “Heltveet.”

1 In the background text of module WG4 the PC’s say, “Noblink are norkers in human speech, aren’t they?” and the gnome Laird Fayluch Na’Gwaylar says, “... you have been greeted by the Uvalnoniz, our Gnomish clan as you would call it” and “...mere norkers as you call them.” These exchanges give us the only Gyax-canon indicating the racial origin of the Lingua-Greyhawka names found in the original Folio and Guide. Assuming the Lingua-Greyhawka names are of a single racial origin as first presented in the Folio and Guide, and that noniz is found among those names, then the racial origin of all Lingua-Greyhawka names is gnomish.

Common to Gnomish (Neblin) Translator

CommonGnomish

a e	ker link
an al	l l
anoid ine	lf lve
alf obn	ling iz
arf ur	m n
arv er	n n
b b	nor nob
bea hee	o e/el
c oz	og eig
ck oz	old it
cl uv	oll ell
d d	om eb
deep svirf	ome on
e o	p p
ea ee	q q
er re	r ur/r
f v/ve	re er
g j	rk nk
gh j/ja	s s
gn n	t t
h h	u u
half hobn	ug u
he hu	uv cl
i i	v v
in i	w w
inoid ine	x x
ish lin	y y
j g	z z
k c/nk	

Sample Common to Neblin Translations

Ant Alt	Deep Gnomish (people/language) Svirfneblin	Drow Elf/Black Elf Drewolve/Blozolve
Bear Heer	Goblin Jebli	Grey Elf Jerolve
Bugbear Buheer	High Goblinoid (Hobgoblin) High Jebline or Hijebline	Half-Elf Hobnolve
Boar Beer	Gold Jit	High Elf Hijolve
Cat Ozet	Goodbye Jeedbyo	Orc Euroz, also Uroz
Common Ozommen	Halfing Hobniz	Half-Orc Hobneuroz/Hobnuroz
Deepoerth Svirfelreth	Hairfoot Heivoot	Owl Ewl
Dog Deig	Stout Stelut	People Poeplo
Dragon Drejen	Talfellow Tellvollew	Quickling Quioziz
Dwarf Dwur	Hello Hulle	Sword Swelurd
Mountain Dwarf Nelnteindwur	Human Hunal	Troll Trel
Hill Dwarf Hilldwur	Humanoid Hunaline	Underdark Undreden
Elephant Olophalt	Jermaline Grenelio	Unoerth Unelreth
Giant Jialt	Joke Genko	Urog Reig
Gems Jons	Key Coy	Clan Uval
Gnoll Nell (alt. Kell and Nonuz)	Kobold Celbit	Vampire Venpiro
Gnomeling Noniz	Lion Lien	Wolf Welve
Rock Gnomeling Reloznoniz	Night Nijat	Xorn Xelurn
Forest Gnomeling Velrostnoniz	Ogre Eiger	Zombie Zenbio
Gnomish (people/language) Neblin	Elf Olve	

Omnipotent View

Izzygule and Atok.

by Richard Di Ioia

A large figure dressed all in black leather stands atop a battered castle. He stares into the distance as if waiting for a sign. To his side is a smaller figure, dressed in clothing typical of the Furyondy merchant class.

“How certain are you of the knowledge you have given me, Francis?” Atok said loudly enough to be heard above the roaring winter wind of the Furyondy landscape.

“Very certain, Lord Atok. I saw him with my own eyes.”

“Excellent, otherwise my friend and I will be very displeased with you.”

“Well, I wouldn’t phrase it so ominously as that, Atok.” This last was spoken by a sparrow sitting on the edge of the merlons of the keep.

“Well it’s about time, Izzygule. I have better things to do than wait on the play time of an Air mage.”

“Have you spoken to your son about Redtail?” asked Izzygule.

“Yes, he understand the seriousness of the task. You may go, Francis. The rest of the conversation lies between myself and Izzygule. You will be recompensed once we return.”

“Thank you Lord Atok, Master Mage Izzygule.”

“Come, let us prepare ourselves for the journey.” said Atok.

“I will speak to your son first and meet you in a few minutes back here.” said Izzygule

We now descend into the largest of the buildings within the keep and into the room of Tarok son of Atok and Yolanda Squatpump.

“You understand what to do? Right Tarok?” asked Izzygule.

Tarok stood up proudly within his 4 year old frame, wielding a small hammer in his right hand. “Yes, I will guard Redtail with my life. If he falls ill, I am to warn mommy about it. Then I have to make sure that he keeps eating no matter how much he doesn’t want to.”

“Exactly. It’s very important you take care of him. You are one of the few I would trust with Redtail’s life.” spoke Izzygule with emotion in his voice.

“Don’t worry Uncle Izzygule, me and Redtail are really good friends. I won’t let anybody hurt him.”

Once again atop the keep’s roof. A magical carpet is floating above the parapets. Sitting on it is the Master Mage Izzygule - girded for war with his mystic staff and cowl of vines. Next to him is Lord Atok, wearing enough weapons and armor to level a keep on his own. The carpet slowly rises and flies East...

The Effects of Multiple Potion Consumption

- or -

One swig over the line, sweet Cuthbert, one swig over the line...

by Mark Boase, Dave Stebbins & Jason Zavoda

Magical potions have many beneficial effects but the old saying about too much of a good thing definitely has its place in my campaign. Here is a random effects chart for multiple consumption of potions. When two potions are consumed at the same time, this table can be consulted to gauge their combined effect. If more than two potions are consumed then the table should be consulted once for every potion taken, for example, 2 potions consumed consult the table once, 3 potions, consult the table thrice, etc...

- 1) Hair changes color. (Red, Green, White, the more dramatic the change the better)
- 2) Hair falls out. (This can occur suddenly, all the hair simply drops off, or slowly, where the character feels strands slowly come)
- 3) Hair begins to grow. (Duration unpredictable, speed of growth unpredictable)
- 4) Hair becomes sensitive to pain
- 5) Hair is transformed into tiny snakes (which might not be under the control of the PC)
- 6) Teeth change color (black, green....)
- 7) Fang teeth become real fangs
- 8) Character becomes intoxicated
- 9) Character begins to hallucinate
For example:
 - a) Tiny pink winged elephants with small green people riding them begin to fly around the PC’s head and keep asking if the PC has seen ‘Herbert’ and if there is any marmalade at hand.
 - b) The sky begins to change color and the clouds take on rude and insulting shapes (I won’t even mention what the moon is doing).
 - c) The plants and stones begin mumbling behind the PC’s back. Only the PC’s name can be made out from their conversation but one object opens an eye and winks at him before the effect ends.
- 10) The character becomes very, very hungry and has an overwhelming urge to lie on the ground and look at their hands.
- 11) Mouth goes completely numb. Lack of speech and lots of uncontrolled drooling. Duration 1 to 5 hours.
- 12) Sneezing. Sudden and uncontrollable sneezing fits occur 1 per turn lasting one whole round. Duration 2- 6 hours.
- 13) Rash. Like a bad case of the hives, PC’s skin becomes distractingly itchy! Character at say a -2 to perform all but simplest tasks due to overall distraction effect. Duration 1 - 8 hours.
- 14) Stomach cramps. Character at say a -2 to perform all but simplest tasks due to terrible pain. Duration 2 - 6 hours.
- 15) Massive internal gas. Initial belching at frat house levels followed shortly by flatulence that would make a mule blush. Duration 1 to 4 hours.

NEXT TO HIM IS LORD ATOK, WEARING ENOUGH WEAPONS AND ARMOR TO LEVEL A KEEP ON HIS OWN. THE CARPET SLOWLY RISES AND FLIES EAST...

- 16) Projectile vomiting. Almost total inability to perform anything while retching persists. Duration 1 to 4 turns.
- 17) Projectile diarrhea. Now that's just plain disgusting but a very possible outcome - so to speak. Duration 1 - 3 hours.
- 18) Sensory disconnection. Pick 1 of the 5 senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch, or taste and have it go completely off-line for 1 to 6 hours. Effects to PC can be mild to disastrous depending on the sense and the PC's class!
- 19) Person transforms into some sort of lycanthrope-looking creature (a sort of Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde thing) which lasts the length of the potions but has no other effect.
- 20) One of the potions works with a reversed effect.
- 21) Drinker becomes nauseous and heaves. Effectively stunned (or some other condition, DMG not available right now) for 2 rounds, then potions function normally, but for half duration.
- 22) Potions work normally but, like too much coffee, leaves the drinker wired and unable to sleep (for 12-24 hours). This will prevent spellcasters from re-memorizing spells because of lack of rest.
- 23). Potion begins to shrink the character at a rate of 1 inch/turn till the DM decides that the character has been punished enough. Clothes and equipment do not change size.
- 24). Potion starts the character growing, see effect 23).
- 25). Potion starts characters fingernails and toenails growing at a rate of 1 inch/turn.
- 26). Potion makes the character sing whenever they try to talk. DM should pick the song, such as the yellow rose of texas, the character can use any words to the song that they like but must sing at least one verse whenever they try to speak.
- 27). Potion makes the character dance. Tap, Ballet, Morris, etc... whenever they try to walk or run.

The goal is 100 potion effects! Do you have any ideas of a humorous sort for such? Email; nemesis@magpage.com

Red, The Sun With Smoke, The Oerth With Blood 'The Charge of Caldni Vir'

by Jason Zavoda

"Vir, you are to take the 3rd mounted prodromoi and search the north-east in force. Send out single riders to feel ahead, but I want you to keep your command together. If there is trouble, crush it. If you can't, then run. No heroics. I want to know what those damn barbarians are up to but none of the patrols have returned. You are to turn back in three days regardless and rejoin the army at Spinecastle."

"Yes Commander." Caldni Vir raised his arm in salute then turned his horse and spurred away.

Astolpho, Lord Adri, Commander of the Northern Host, watched his most junior captain ride off in a cloud of dust. "To be that young again, Florismart." he said to his companion and shook his head wistfully.

"Such things are possible." the battle-mage answered. "Though not my speciality."

"They always have a cost." answered Astolpho. "One that I will never pay. Besides old friend, I don't think I was meant to live forever."

* * *

"An independent command!" Amaury exclaimed. "Vir you always had the luck."

"Luck had nothing to do with it, Amaury." Caldni Vir smiled.

"Hah!" laughed Triamond. "Lancers," he shook his head, "too much to expect the Heavy Horse."

"Far too much." said Caldni Vir.

The three young nobles walked through the muddy camp at a brisk pace. Their cloaks were spattered and their armored boots thickly covered. Mud was everywhere. The hooves of five thousand horses had chopped the wet ground into a mire. Booted feet had done their best to spray the mire over and into tents, then shower brown specks of the muck onto every bit of cloth, pack, saddle, and suit of armor.

"A week of warm weather and sunshine." said Amaury.

"What?" Triamond asked.

"He means it would take a week to dry out this place." Caldni Vir explained.

"Stop reading my mind." laughed Amaury. "Another week of washing to get everything clean."

Triamond shook his head. "Why bother? It will only get dirty again."

"Why shave? Why eat? Why breath?" Amaury snipped.

"There is something about an army camp that brings on the rain." said Caldni Vir looking up into the grey-cloudy sky as he paused before their tent.

"Take off those boots, Triamond!" Amaury commanded. "You're not tracking up our tent again."

The young knight grumbled but joined his pair of friends while they sat and removed their boots.

“Not even a page to help us with our boots.” grumbled Amaury.

“Lord Adri believes in traveling light. I agree.” said Caldni Vir.

Sitting side by side atop barrels and supply boxes the three were an interesting sight. Black haired and clean shaven, Caldni Vir looked young. No one would mistake him for a youth, but he had the appearance of student rather than a captain of cavalry.

Amaury was red haired and of an age with his two companions, though he had a crafty expression that made him look older than his friends. He sported a thin mustache and a fringe of beard cut close to his chin, but the sides of his face were shaved. Amaury’s hair was cut short, while both Triamond and Caldni Vir had hair that could be tied back in a tail that would reach between their shoulder blades.

Blond haired and broad shouldered, Triamond wore his hair and beard long. So pale that his skin was almost white, it was the mark of Suel heritage. Triamond was the by-blow of a barbarian slave girl and a powerful noble, but no one with a sense of self-preservation ever mentioned it to his face.

* * *

Vir the Black, Amaury the Red and Triamond the White, that was how they were known. Caldni Vir’s banner was a simple triangle of black. It fluttered from the lance of his standard bearer who rode to one side of the young captain. Small strips of black cloth adorned every lance, the troopers of the 3rd had ridden with Caldni Vir before and they were glad to have him as their captain.

Some troopers lashed a red scrap of cloth to their lances just below the colors of Caldni Vir. The black and red, that was Amaury’s banner while he rode under the command of his friend. His handful of followers sought to curry favor with the rich young noble. A score of such troopers with mercenary intent followed Amaury.

Triamond wore a strip of black cloth and a strip of white on his right arm and eight troopers did the same. His followers were men of the north, the Varangians they called themselves. They were skilled woodsmen and trackers all.

The 3rd galloped from camp, Fifteen hundred strong, lances raised in salute as they passed beneath the watchful eye of the outer guards. The wilds swallowed them quickly, the rolling hills, lightly wooded here but, further north and east, becoming the Loftwood Forest. Then they were gone, never to be seen again by their commander, Lord Adri, and many a thousand of their comrades who had served beside them in the Northern Host.

* * *

“Triamond.” Vir said with a frustrated snap. “Anything? Any sign?”

“No Sir.” snapped back Triamond. The large man was just as frustrated.

Two days of patrols and riding had found no sign of the barbarians. The woods were thickening as they drew near the Loftwood and Caldni Vir was mindful of the time they no longer had.

“There must be something.” Vir shook his head. He’d removed the lancer helmet and hung it from the pommel of his saddle. His black hair was flat and damp with sweat.

“We even had Miskurblindi out casting the bones.” said Triamond.

“That tame barbarian hedge-wizard of yours.” Caldni Vir swore under his breath. “If he can’t find a trail or sign of magic, then there is none to be found.”

“He thinks a lot of you too.” laughed Triamond.

“Well no one is going to be thinking much of me when we get to Spinecastle.” Caldni Vir said to his friend. “Where are they?”

“North.” spoke up Amaury. The noble was attired in full armor, such as the heavy cavalry of Lord Adri wore, though his was enmaled in blood red.

“You will kill that horse.” said Triamond disgustedly. “Look’s like you are ready to join Adri’s 1st cataphract.”

“North.” said Vir, interrupting the banter. “Amaury, how do you know?”

“Blessings of the War God.” the young noble gave them a wicked smile. Am I not his faithful paladin.”

Triamond spat on the ground, but did not comment.

“This is a true foretelling?” asked Caldni Vir.

“I would not joke about such a thing.” said Amaury. “We have not found them because they are not here. I was granted a vision.” the young man grimaced. His face bore signs of pain and lines which had not been their just that very morning. “At a cost.” he added noting the looks from his two friends. “Mountains, a pass, very treacherous, a score of barbarian warriors falling to their deaths at a time. Then rockslides, beasts and monsters, death, much death. These barbarians keep coming none the less. They cross the mountains in a swarm like maggots on a rotting corpse. One dies, ten die, a hundred, but they still come on in their thousands. I saw a tribe of ogre’s dispute their passage, they were swept aside in moments. They come for us.”

“Here?” asked Triamond, surprised.

Amaury shook his head and wiped the back of his hand across his eyes as if to clear them. “What? No not here. What did I say?”

“You said ‘They come for us’.” Triamond repeated the young noble’s very words.

“Well I don’t think so.” Amaury shook his head. “How would they know we are here? And why would thousands of barbarians come looking for us?”

“You’re the one who said...” began Triamond.

“Spinecastle.” Caldni Vir said firmly. “They come for Spinecastle. Maybe for the Northern Host as well, if their spies were privy to the marching orders.”

“How would that be?” asked Triamond.

“Hah!” laughed Amaury derisively. “The trooper who scrapes my boots knew Spinecastle to be our destination before we set out.”

“Our men would not betray us.” Triamond stated firmly.

Amaury just rolled his eyes, but Caldni Vir clapped his friend and lieutenant on the shoulder.

“Triamond.” said Vir. “Our men our brave, but courage doesn’t mean good sense or a still tongue, especially when loosened with ale.”

“Many would say that good sense and courage are mutually exclusive.” smiled Amaury.

“What do you mean by that?” scowled Triamond.

“Perhaps I should change ‘good sense’ to ‘education’.” Amaury laughed.

“What!” sputtered Triamond, his white face growing red.

“Proof positive.” Amaury said casually to Caldni Vir, gesturing to their companion.

“Amaury! Stop playing.” Caldni Vir ordered with a commanding voice. “Triamond, control yourself. Now then, Amaury. How far ahead are they? How much time do we have?”

The smile faded from the face of the red armored knight and the distant look returned to his eyes. “You are already too late.” came a deep sepulchered voice. The words came from Amaury’s lips but the voice... the voice belonged to no living man.

* * *

Dawn rose over Spinecastle. Sparkles of light reflected from the polished helms and spearpoints of the castle guards. A chorus of hammer, saw, and axe began to sound. The noise came from a town growing up around the keep. The voice of the morning belonged to the craftsmen and laborers hard at their work by the break of day.

In a nearby field, a second town had sprung up overnight. Tents like rows of mushrooms lined the muddy oerth, neat and orderly as any planted crop. The smell of breakfast fires, a dozen hundreds strong, wafted from the camp.

* * *

Astolpho had ridden hard the day before, ridden his troops hard as well. He’d pushed the endurance of both man and horse hard as he dared, so as to reach Spinecastle while light enough remained to make to set the camp. Though both had been tired, it was the horses who’d had their meal and rest before then men.

When the troops arrived, a delegation was sent from the castle. They’d waited with growing impatience for Lord Adri to leave the camp and meet with them. A messenger was sent within the seeming chaos of horses, troops and wagons, to find the commander of the Northern Host.

The Lord Commander had taken off his helm and gauntlets, but left on his cuirass and heavy cloak. He felt the chill take flight and the warmth of honest labor flow into his arms and legs as he brushed down the back and flanks of his stallion.

“Lord?” spoke up one of his personal guard.

“Yes Stephanos.” Astolpho replied without looking up.

“Lord, a messenger from Spinecastle.” sergeant Stephanos informed him.

“From Lord Andras, Marquis of Spinecastle.” interjected the messenger with a measure of both pride and impatience in his voice. “Are you Lord Adri?” he said, staring at Astolpho in surprise as the lord commander worked like any of his troopers would as he tended his mount. He looked like an aging cavalryman, which he was, and not a powerful lord who ruled the north in the Great King’s name, but he was that as well.

Without glancing at the messenger, Astolpho stood back and removed his cloak, his cuirass and then his shirt. He wiped his brow with the back of his hand and went back to work, checking the stallions hooves and shoes for stones or damage.

“Tell your Marquis of Spinecastle,” said Astolpho quietly, “to wait.”

Finally he glanced up at the messenger and said, with a growl in his voice, “Horses come first. Something your, lord, seems to have forgotten, or never learned.”

The messenger bristled at the contempt in the Lord Commander’s voice but was careful in his protest. “But my Lord, this is peasant’s work!” he exclaimed.

Astolpho paused in his work and looked on the man with some distaste. “Stephanos. Remove this... fop. In one piece mind you.”

“Yes my Lord!” Sergeant Stephanos replied with enthusiasm, a smile on his lips. With a gesture of his head, two burly troopers grabbed the messenger and hauled him away like a sack of grain. Stephanos marched after them, while cries of protest merged with the noise and bustle of the camp.

The battle-mage, Florismart, appeared from the shadows of a wagon that formed one side of the temporary stable.

“What kind of fools have they sent out here?” muttered Astolpho.

“The normal kind.” answered the mage. “The kind you have no time for, unless you mean us.”

Astolpho ignored the mage’s humor. “I now see why I have been ordered to this misbegotten wilderness, and where the source of all the problems lies.” he nodded toward where the messenger had stood.

“You have no need of our priestess of Istus then?” mused Florismart.

“Your spellcasters have begun their work?” asked Astolpho in reply.

“My people have begun, yes.” said Florismart. “The sun is down.” he looked into the darkening sky which was turning rapidly to black.

“An owl flies above the camp. Its eyes are ours to use. Cynthia, our Istun cleric, she consults her crystal orb...” he trailed off.

“Problem?” asked Astolpho.

“Yes.” Florismart touched the bracers on his wrists in a nervous gesture. “There is a cloud. A greyness that she cannot penetrate. Something is coming, something that we cannot see.”

“Something has already arrived.” said Astolpho firmly.

Florismart raised his brow in speculation.

* * *

The sounds and smells of morning were wrapped in a cloak of grey. grey clouds above and grey fog across the land. The fields were damp, the valleys to the north were choked with mists and the woods were unnaturally dark.

Patrols of horsemen circled the town and the camp. Their armor, muted with paints of green and brown, blended will with the surrounding land. Dismounted troopers were set out as pickets and sent out into the nearby woods and brush to scour them for signs of barbarian scouts or spys.

All was quiet.

* * *

Lord Adri ordered his men to sharpen their swords and don their armor. He had with him his mounted troops who numbered in the thousands, but his infantry, the bulk of the Northern Host, would not arrive for days. Until then they were on their own.

Five thousand horsemen, there should be nothing for such a host to fear in these wildlands, thought Astolpho, but still a worry gnawed at him and his mind could find no ease.

"Where is Caldni Vir." Astolpho asked himself. "Three days and not a word, fifteen hundred men and a sign of a single one."

"Three days time will be tonight." said Florismart. "Give him till the end of this day before you start to worry. Perhaps he has found your 'damned barbarians'."

"He knows enough to send out riders." Astolpho said grimly. "What of your trinket?"

The mage walked over to a wooden case that sat upon a table next to the commanders sleeping pallet. He took a dull red gem from where it rested and held it up between finger and thumb like an egg. "I should sense something. Some impression should come to me even if the wearer of its twin were dead. It might as well be in the wooden case and I were trying to read it through the lid."

"Vir." muttered Astolpho. "You think him dead."

"I don't know. Something blocks this," he tossed the red gem in his hand, "something blocks the scrying crystal. Istus's cleric is blind."

"Very amusing." Astolpho said without a smile. "What of this fog on the land, the mist?"

"It is natural in itself." Florismart explained. "But it is unnatural in its actions."

"The scouts say that they can find nothing within the woods. The brush and fields are empty as well, lifeless. The animals are gone." Astolpho said flatly. "I have warned the town and the keep."

"And?" asked the mage.

"They obey. Even if they do not know why." replied Astolpho. "I gave them no details. Prepare, because the scouts can find nothing." he laughed without humor.

"When there should be something." Florismart agreed.

"These fools would not understand." Astolpho shook his head. "But we are prepared for anything that might come.

But they were not...

* * *

The day wore on till noon, but the grey sky hid the sun. A rolling mist crept from the woods and valleys to sweep across the fields. Then the scouts and pickets disappeared without a sound. The mist had eaten them, swallowed them whole and left not a crumb.

The white cloud flowed into the camp and over the wall of the town, drifting through the streets like a sudden flood of water filling the banks of a dry stream. As the first tendrils passed the outer edge of tents, the mage Florismart's eyes flashed wide, though he was nowhere within sight of the spilling fog. An explosion of magic fire came from the edge of camp, and outlined by the flames could be seen the howling shapes of Fruztii warriors.

Barbarians with wild hair and beards, clad in the skin of beasts and coats of mail, burst into pillars of fire, those who had not been blasted from their feet. They danced and spun like Paynim mystics, till they collapsed in burning piles of popping fat, blackening flesh and charring bone. More warriors came after. These gave their burning comrades a wide berth, but they did not slow.

Half-a-dozen such wards had been set along each side of the camp. All six to both the east and west were triggered, one after another, like a ragged volley of catapults. The roar of each magic burst was alarm enough to rouse the entire camp. Slain in the blasts were two score at least. Ten thousand more were left.

Now horns began to sound from within the camp. Signals that only Astolpho's troopers understood. Men in full armor formed at the center of the tents, The 1st and 2nd cataphract, they were not taken by surprise. Three thousand men and three thousand horse.

The Fruztii rushed forward, some outrunning the edge of fog. Dismounted troops, armed with short bows and javelins, began to harry them. A horde of howling, hooting, raving northmen charged the tents, and fell. The ground opened beneath their feet, they dropped down and into pits lined with sharpened stakes. Those in front were slain, those behind landing upon them, driving the jagged, wooden points deep with their weight upon their kindreds backs.

Still they came on, and those that could not run, they crawled.

The camp was like an empty sack of wine puffed full with air. As the Fruztii rushed forward they slashed down the tents, revealing nothing but empty ground beneath. But the center of the camp was filled with men. The riders of the Northern Host were gathered there, a core of razored steel, and men, and horse, waiting for the northmen to attack.

A long wail came from a dozen horns and the dismounted troops withdrew. The Fruztii sent out a chanting howl as they chased after. The sound of hooves and clanking armor were masked.

The 1st cataphract moved toward the east, the 2nd to the west. The lightly armored scouts, the 1st prodromoi, raced for their own mounts that waited at the center of the camp and passed between the ranks of heavy cavalry.

The ground began to thrum, the boom of the heavy horse moving at a gallop. Above the clomp of hoof on sod there was a jangle, almost musical, the scale shirts of the 1st and 2nd cataphract as they broke into a charge, a hundred thousand small plates of steel that rose and fell with every step of horse.

Lances that had been held high slanted down. These were not the light, almost javelin-like, lances that the prodromoi used. The cataphract used a heavier, longer lance with a point shaped like a willow leaf. These points began to strike. The running mob of Fruztii met the ordered line of cavalry with a clang of metal and a crunch of flesh and breaking bones.

Leaf-blades cut through steel rings, through chest and ribs or spine and out the back. One row passed through the mass of blades and beards. They were like a thresher mowing down a field of grain. Blood sprayed the horses, painting them a sticky black.

Some horses fell to spear, or axe, or sword. Most riders did not survive the millstone weight of their rolling, thrashing mounts. The few that jumped free, died beneath a dozen vengeful Fruztii blades.

On either side of the camp, the horsemen of the 1st and 2nd turned their charge. They angled to the north, heading for the town beyond, and as they turned, they swept the edges of the camp. The Fruztii were forced back, some falling into the spike-filled trench, others ridden down beneath the hooves of the heavy horse.

Scores died, then hundreds, but the losses to the horsemen were only a dozen. The 1st prodromoi had taken no casualties. Still safe at the center of the camp, they began to trot toward the north, led by Astolpho and the five hundred heavy horse of his personal guard.

To the south, the Fruztii rushed in, fast on the trail of the horsemen. They found an empty camp, filled with empty tents and empty wagons. Swords and axes slashed in passing at tentcloth and wood, but they did not stop. Nothing left behind to loot, no one to fight, they ran after the horsemen.

Astolpho laughed as he rode from the north end of the camp, but the subchiefs who led the Fruztii behind him laughed as well and urged their kinsmen onward.

The ground began to shake. This was no rumble from horse's hooves, but the oerth itself. The fog shrouded walls of the town creaked and groaned, then teetered and collapsed. The dust raised adding to the veil of mist that held them in a blinding grasp. A cheering roar came from the grey filled space beyond the walls, then shaggy warriors came pouring over the gap of rubble and into the unfinished streets and houses of the town.

Astolpho saw the walls collapse, felt the shaking of the oerth. He slowed his pace and so did the troops behind him. Then a whirling hedge of blades appeared to either sides. Horse and man were turned into a spray of blood and liquid flesh.

The sky above turned black and a rumble of thunder roared out as lightning split the sky. A bolt struck at Astolpho, but Florismart was there and the lightning became just a nimbus of blue that danced around a sphere of translucent power that protected the commander of the Northern Host.

Next came a whirlwind to the west that split into three creatures of the elements. They fell upon the 2nd cataphract and tossed men through the air like dolls and scattered their mounts in fear.

To the east, the damp ground began to congeal. The drops of liquid running together from a hundred yards in each direction, till two moving walls of water formed themselves. These washed over the troopers at the head of the 1st cataphract. Men drowned on land, or were smashed with fists that struck with the power of a wave. But these two were weak, so far removed from their element, and the 1st pressed on or around them.

To the north, the fog rolled back and the oerth began to heave and take on human form. Five man-shaped giants, made of muddy oerth and stone, tore themselves from the ground. They left great rents and gouges in the fields, born in part of the ground from which they sprang.

Florismart snarled and held out a wand. "Az-Tra-Pe!" he pointed at the nearest elemental and a lightning bolt of his own lanced forth and wrapped two of the monsters in its embrace. A third moved to the side just in time and Florismart cursed, then sent out another bolt. The two who had been struck, twice now, came apart and dropped to the ground as unanimated dirt.

The three that survived rushed the Lord Commander, but his guardsmen rushed forward, one turned his horse to block the commander's own, to stop him from charging into the fight.

"Out of my way!" bellowed Astolpho.

"Stay where you are!" yelled Florismart. "Commander, this is their fight. What of our flanks?"

"You're right!" Astolpho looked around him, standing in his stirrups. To his left, the 2nd cataphract was stalled. Already the barbarians were closing, some engaged with the horses along their left flank. Lances had been dropped and they fought with swords and shields, many had dismounted and fought on foot, or had their

horses killed beneath them. The 1st had driven through the creatures made from water. A handful had been slain, but the line of horsemen was moving fast, away from camp, toward the town where they had been commanded to regroup. "Trumpeter! Sound out. Wheel to the right. 1st prodromoi to the right. At a gallop!"

The signal went out and the lancers behind the commanders personal guard began to stream away, following the last of the 1st cataphract.

"1st prodromoi. Engage right flank and pass on! Astolpho ordered and the trumpeter sounded and the lancers obeyed. "2nd cataphract. Wheel right! Left flank fight and withdraw!" and the Lord Commander's words were turned to piercing sound by the signalman.

"Time for you to withdraw commander." said Molion, the captain of his guard.

"We will wait for the 2nd to move." said Astolpho.

The 1st cataphract had passed from the camp. The scouts behind them had a harder time and many fell to the spears and swords of the Fruztii who rushed upon them from the cover of the mist. One in ten of the 1st prodromoi did not leave the camp alive. On the west, five hundred of the 2nd cataphract were trapped and slain.

Stalled and hemmed in by their own comrades, the heavy horse were easy targets. With their horses killed, and the dismounted troopers stunned and slow, they were no match for the horde of Fruztii that assailed them.

The Lord Commander's guard rode on the left flank of the wounded 2nd cataphract. Astolpho lead a sweeping charge, wheeling around and riding toward the south. He came down on the Fruztii like a wave of steel and swept the first of them away. He turned again, crashing against more warriors coming from the south then fought those rushing from the east.

Few of his guardsmen fell and many of the Fruztii were slain. The smile had returned to Astolpho's lips as his guard thundered toward the north, escaping from the barbarians trap as if they passed through the fingers of a grasping hand. Ahead of them, the last of the 2nd cataphract was disappearing into the mist beyond the northern border of the camp.

A hedge of thorns, thrice the thickness of a castle wall, higher than a mounted man, and stretching from one edge of the Fruztii lines to the other, sprang up amid his horsemen.

Horsemen were thrown from their mounts deep within the brambles, horses were cut a thousand times, the pain sending them into screaming madness, and the Fruztii closed in on all sides.

"Fo-Tee." intoned Florismart, and a ball of fire leapt from his fingers. It set the hedge ablaze, but the green thorns smoked and the fire sputtered.

"Save it." Astolpho told him.

The Lord Commander's guard fanned out around their leader. They could not hope to cut their way through the mass of shrieking Fruztii. No ground between the barbarians and them to build their speed, they were stopped dead and surrounded on three sides, their backs to the enchanted hedge.

The Fruztii closed. Spears flew in great numbers, javelins sailed

back with better aim, but all too few. Horses died in droves, the easiest target for the Fruztii spears, then the barbarians were within reach of sword. The command went out and the guard dismounted. Their fate was sealed but they would see to it that their mounts might survive.

Astolpho faced the east. His guards were spread out in a shrinking semi-circle surrounded by a pile of dead. The fighting was bitter. The wounded hacked to pieces, their heads tossed to the wild mob and stuck atop the points of spears. The Fruztii paid the price in blood for such prizes. Four hundred guardsmen slain amid more than a thousand northern warriors, crippled, dead or dying.

Two score Fruztii died at once as Florismart sent out another ball of fire to explode in their packed ranks. The mage had saved his spells, but now the end seemed near, the time to use them and all the power he possessed, was at hand.

A hush fell on the howling barbarian mass. The Fruztii fell back, leaving a writhing, muddy carpet behind them. Sixty guardsmen still breathed. They drew back and Astolpho was at their center with Florismart beside him.

There was a wide tunnel opened through the barbarian mass, like a road that cut through a field of grain grown high. Twelve figures walked this passage. Men and women, painted blue and naked. Their hair was twined with vines that squirmed like snakes. In their hands they held staves, each with a beast's head.

One bore a lion-staff and the head snarled. Another had an eagle's head and the eyes blazed with life. One blue-painted man looked half-ogre at least. Tall and broad, he bore a staff with a gorgon's head and mist streamed from its open mouth.

A handful javelins remained and spears that had been thrown by the Fruztii. A mixed flight of these weapons went out and struck the blue-painted twelve. Spear points snapped or bent, javelins bounced aside, but the twelve were not even slowed. The ogre-man raised his staff and bellowed out a command. "Sluka!" he called and the Fruztii answered with a growl.

"KILL AS MANY AS YOU CAN!" Astolpho shouted. "Escape if you are able, old friend." he said to Florismart.

"Az-Tra-Pe!" the mage replied and the lightning leapt from his wand, cutting a swathe through the charging Fruztii."

* * *

"This fog, I have never seen the like." said Caldni Vir.

"It is magic stuff." said Triamond. "I asked Miskerblundi."

"What does he say?" asked Vir.

Triamond laughed and unsheathed his sword. "He said, 'fearlessness is better than a faint heart for those who would go out of doors.'"*

"Just what does that nonsense mean?" Amaury asked.

"Trouble." Caldni Vir answered.

The sun was hidden by the clouds as Caldni Vir and the 3rd prodromoi rode from the eastern trail and out onto the fields before the town of Spinecastle. The mist had lifted, and the field of battle was visible from the slight rise of the road.

Fires raged throughout the town and a dull booming could be heard as the Fruztii battered at the castle gates. The dead lay in

heaps amid the flattened camp, more bodies were scattered outside the walls of the town, and a smaller battle looked to have been fought north of the encampment.

A great crowd of barbarians was resting outside the broken town walls. Heaps of loot were spread out before them, and lines of captives were being led away. Off to the south were the banners of the Northern Host. The 1st and 2nd cataphract and the 1st prodromoi, but there were too few troops gathered by half at least.

"By the Lord of Battles." swore Amaury.

"Why aren't they attacking?" asked Triamond, nodding toward the banners of the host.

"Regrouping." said Caldni Vir.

"Or getting ready to run." said Amaury.

"If they were going to run, they would have fled by now." Caldni Vir shook his head. "The Fruztii could never keep up with mounted troops."

"I'd guess there are five thousand at least outside the town." Triamond judged the Fruztii strength. "How many are assaulting the castle?"

"Let's find out." smiled Caldni Vir. "Trumpeter! Sound the charge."

The call of the trumpets was echoed from the south. The survivors of the Northern Host were roused to war and followed the black banner of Caldni Vir deep into the mass of Fruztii warriors.

The hooves and horns of Caldni Vir and the 3rd prodromoi can still be heard on the wind, rising from the fields before the walls of Spinecastle, when enemies are near.

The End.

"Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.
For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!
And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride:
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.
And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown."

Stanzas 2-4, *The Destruction of Sennacherib*
by George Gordon, Lord Byron

Preview of Adventure Coming in Issue #2

After the Giants - The Hall of the Salamander King

by Jason Zavoda

Introduction:

Snurre is dead, his people are scattered, but something has taken up residence within his hall. The king's hill writhes with life. Above, the Hellfurnaces blaze, the peaks vomit forth ash and smoke, the mountains shake. Below, the human lands to the east are cast into shadow.

Blind Parsas, an ancient Yeoman sooth-sayer, has seen a vision. She speaks of four mighty wyrms.



“The first is blue and green and dark as the bottom of the sea. Its tail spins out a whirlpool that no ship can escape.

The second seems as diaphanous as a dream. Its flesh is ice, but its spirit is as black as a thundercloud.

The third is made of stone and rock and mud. A dragon of the Oerth.

Each will rise up to threaten the land, but these three are far off. It is the last of these wyrms that is the concern of the Yeoman folk.

The last, it is to the west. I see a great dragon of fire. His voice shakes the mountains. His children are countless, they are the dragon.

Snurre's hall, that is where the dragon lives. That is where you must go!”

Brave adventurers have tread this path before. The way to Snurre's hall is known, but the times have changed and so have the lands surrounding the king's hill.

Black smoke with a heart of fire now jets from the mountain peak above the hall. The king's hill has been covered with an ash like grey snow that never melts, poisonous vapors descend without warning, streams of acid have replaced what water existed, forming deadly pools that will eat flesh from bone in a screaming instant, and a heat so great that it has no place on Oerth shimmers in waves from the stones.

The rocks weep, the air is filled with a thousand red-hot knives, and the Oerth groans and shakes in pain. This is no place for mortal man, but this is where the adventure begins.