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The one "problem" you have as a limited writer when a new main set comes about is that you suddenly have 300+ new cards to talk about. It's not too bad if you write about constructed as there are usually only a few dozen or so cards in a new set that will have a major impact on constructed. A lot more beyond that are playable but certainly less than half the set will see serious constructed play.

In limited you often have to utilise cards that you wouldn't dream of playing in your constructed decks. I've never had articles on this site with endless lists of card ratings, as I firmly believe cards can only be truly evaluated in the context of the deck you are drafting. I can certainly talk about the colours in general terms but there obviously needs to be some structure to that conversation. As this set is 'The City of Guilds' and this week is Selesnya Week that seems as good a place as any to start. Most of the limited matches you're going to play over the coming months are going to be focused on one guild against another so I think it makes sense to structure the first round of articles around them too.

Selesnya

The green-white guild seems to be very much focused on the Convoke mechanic. I've drafted green-white quite a bit over the last week or so and the best Selesnya decks make ample use of Convoke.

Convoke is a somewhat risky mechanic in some respects. It has a sort of snowball-like effect when it's running well. Your early drops lead into a quick Scatter the Seeds, which in turn leads into a quick Siege Wurm, followed up by a Guardian of Vitu-Ghazi. That's the sort of start that makes the Selesnya decks very powerful and very difficult to stop. While there is a fair amount of removal in the format players do fight over it and it's not unusual for a player to be lacking a removal spell to deal with that size of creature. Galvanic Arc and Last Gasp just don't cut it in that kind of scenario.

The problem with Convoke is when your opening hand contains maybe Gather Courage, Scatter the Seeds, Siege Wurm and four lands. If you don't draw something relevant in the next few turns you could be in a lot of trouble. This is sort of true of most mid-range green decks in any format but here you're encouraged to play more expensive cards with the promise that you can play them for more reasonable costs via Convoke.

If you're drafting Convoke – and if you're drafting Selesnya you probably will be – then you need to focus on your early mana curve to make sure you have enough to do in the first few turns of the game.

Happily (and, I'm sure, not coincidentally), there's plenty there amongst the commons to help you support that focus. In the guild's colours you have a lot of cards that make great plays in the first few turns of the game. Selesnya Evangel on turn two followed by another two-drop on the third turn with



one mana up is one of the best starts you can hope to get with this deck. Fourth turn Siege Wurms then definitely become a possibility.

Veteran Armorer is also very good, as is Transluminant. The Armorer really buffs up your Saprolings later on in the game as you can happily throw three Saprolings in front of a 3/3 and still only lose one of them. Transluminant can force a lot of opposing early drops to stay at home on turn three simply because the opponent doesn't want to trade with the Transluminant and then give you a free 1/1 flyer. This often means you can just cast a Transluminant on turn two and then sit back and Scatter the Seeds at the end of turn four if your opponent elects not to attack.

In fact the main strength of the Selesnya guild lies amongst its commons. If you take the Convoke theme as a starting point let's take a look at all the great cards just amongst the commons that support that archetype: Selesnya Evangel, Guardian of Vitu-Ghazi, Siege Wurm, Fists of Ironwood, Scatter the Seeds, Conclave Equenaut. All of those are common and they're all very good cards for the deck. Put two of each of those in a limited deck and fill it out with other common cards and you've already got a great deck to play with.

In addition to the specific Convoke cards there are plenty more solid cards amongst the green and white commons to fill the deck out with. I've already mentioned the quality early drops you have available but there's also Bramble Elemental, Greater Mossdog, Faith's Fetters and so on. There's no shortage of quality amongst these two colours.



The green-white combination typically has had problems in the past dealing with certain creatures. Damage dealers like Sparksmith, as well as healers and tappers all cause the deck fits, as it usually has no answer to any of them. This set is different though. To start with there's a distinct lack of any of those sorts of creatures. While they are around they aren't as powerful as they have been in previous sets. In addition white does now have the impressive Faith's Fetters as a common in this set and its 'Arrest' style ability can shut down problematic creatures.

It's nearly impossible to rank the Selesnya commons according to their power as you need a good balance of all types of card to have a functional deck. Siege Wurm and Guardian of Vitu-Ghazi are both great cards if your deck can support them. If it can't then they're close to unplayable. When drafting Selesnya you can't simply take one common over another, you have to be actively constructing your deck as you go.

There are some cards that will be universally appealing at the start of a draft though. Faith's Fetters provides some much needed life-gain as well as acting as removal against all manner of threats. I think that card fulfils a role that isn't duplicated by any other card and should usually be taken ahead of the other commons as a result.

Amongst the Convoke cards it's Scatter the Seeds and Conclave Equenaut that are the two cards I definitely look out for early in a draft. Both cards are only over-costed by one mana really because of Convoke and are nice mid-range Convoke cards. They don't sit in your hand forever if your draw turns up creature light and they both provide a lot of bang for their buck if you're able to Convoke them out cheaply. The instant speed nature of Scatter the Seeds has proven useful for me on several occasions as it can often provide unexpected blockers for your unsuspecting opponent. It also allows you to keep mana back for other effects and then cast the Scatter only if your mana is free at the end of your opponent's turn.

Beyond those cards I tend to take Siege Wurm, Guardian of Vitu-Ghazi and Selesnya Evangel at about the same sort of level. All those cards are solid in the deck and what I'd take would depend on what I felt I needed at the time. Seeds of Strength is a very good card in this deck and is another excellent common you should be happy to pick early.

Here's a recent Selesnya draft-deck that is an easy 3-0. In Selesnya decks I'm going to be listing cards like Scatter the Seeds and Fists of Ironwood as creatures as that's effectively what they are. This was about as good as most Selesnya decks could hope to get I think:

Selesnya Draft Deck

Main Deck
40 cards

7 Forest	1 Benevolent Ancestor	1 Chord of Calling
6 Plains	1 Centaur Safeguard	2 Faith's Fetters
2 Selesnya Sanctuary	1 Civic Wayfinder	1 Fists of Ironwood
1 Vitu-Ghazi, the City-Tree	1 Conclave Equenaut	1 Gaze of the Gorgon
16 lands	1 Golgari Brownscale	1 Moldervine Cloak
	1 Guardian of Vitu-Ghazi	3 Scatter the Seeds
	1 Nightguard Patrol	1 Seeds of Strength
	1 Selesnya Evangel	1 Selesnya Signet
	1 Selesnya Guildmage	11 other spells
	1 Siege Wurm	
	1 Tolsimir Wolfblood	
	1 Transluminant	
	1 Twilight Drover	
	13 creatures	

You can see even in this listing above with multiple five and six mana spells the addition of Convoke along with the guild lands and the Signet means you can easily get away with just 16 lands and still have room for a colourless land without really hurting things.

The Chord of Calling was especially nice in the above deck. In two separate games I was able to block with some Saprolings and then Convoke out the Twilight Drover when damage was on the stack, soon doubling the amount of tokens and easily overwhelming my opponent.

In addition to the Convoke ability there are also a lot of green decks that take advantage of the commons that aid in splashing additional colours. These decks are often formed from a Selesnya base but they could equally be Golgari. It doesn't take many copies of Farseek and Civic Wayfinder along with the various Signets and guild dual-lands to support a four-colour deck. Terrarion can also help cast that one off-colour card if you draw them together. There are plenty of powerful cards in this format that you can splash and if your mana-base can support it, then playing four or even five colours can be quite viable. You'll usually see these decks being green-white base, and splashing some red and black cards. Both of these colours can be easily splashed as they're in the two Guilds that feature one of your main colours anyway.

I'm going to leave my initial impressions of Selesnya there because I also want to tackle Boros this week as well. While a more in-depth article for each guild might be appropriate later I'm still learning the format and I don't want to let a month's worth of articles go by before we start into draft picks, walkthroughs and so on.

Boros

Boros is a very different animal from the other guilds. It's the fastest of the four by far and has gone up in my estimations considerably since the pre-release. In the drafts I've been in lately I've drafted Boros more than average and have been having a lot of success with it.

It should go without saying that it's the most aggressive guild of the four. In my limited experience so far the best draws I've had with a Boros deck involve one-drops, two-drops and three-drops followed up with some trickery. If you're drafting Boros you'll often have red to yourself and while it's not the deepest colour of them all there's a few decent commons.

The best of them all is clearly Galvanic Arc. In Boros especially this is one of the best cards you can hope for, as the first-strike it grants can be very useful on commons like Ordrun Commando. The fact that it can deal three to an opponent also occasionally comes in handy.

Beyond the Arc the next best card for me is Skyknight Legionnaire. The Legionnaire provides some much-needed evasion and does so at an extremely reasonable cost. Many times you'll lead off with a two-drop like Veteran Armorer and then a Legionnaire while an opponent has nothing relevant on their second turn. Boros decks need to get their beats on quickly and there's no other creature that does that as well as a Legionnaire does.

The evasion granted also gives you a late game when the board gets stalled. Neither the Golgari nor Selesnya guilds have a lot in the way of flyers and if they don't have the necessary removal spells there's every chance the Legionnaire will go all the way. At this point in time I think I'd draft the Legionnaire even ahead of Faith's Fetters, which just shows how crucial it is to the majority of Boros decks. That opinion may well change over time of course but time will tell on that.



The rest of the Boros deck needs to be filled with aggressive creatures. Veteran Armorer is solid, as is Nightguard Patrol, Screeching Griffin and Thundersong Trumpeter. Viashino Fangtail is probably the second best red common after Galvanic Arc as it attacks quite hard as well as taking out blockers or dealing damage straight to an opponent. I quite like the two one-drop Goblins in the set as well. War-Torch Goblin deals a few points of damage when it comes down on turn one and then later on can usually kill a blocker that cost considerably more mana than itself. Frenzied Goblin is very good at forcing through extra damage in the first few turns of the game and can also help a late game alpha-strike.

The Radiance ability is useful in this deck as long as you have enough guild cards to cast it on. I've made good use of both Rally the Righteous and Wojek Siren but they're obviously a lot better when you have cards that are both red and white to cast them on so they affect all your creatures. Both these cards can save creatures or help deal a considerable amount of extra damage. Rally the Righteous is especially nice when you can cast it with a first-striker in play, or to untap a Fangtail while dealing extra damage with your Legionnaire or Sabertooth Alley Cat. If you can get hold of a Cleansing Beam then you definitely want to do so. Sometimes the card won't be much beyond a



simple one-for-one removal spell but other times it'll decimate opposing board positions. Many times the Selesnya decks will have a hoard of Saprolings along with several other smaller creatures, and the Dimir decks too will frequently have a number of low toughness men in play. The only thing you need to be careful of is making sure the target of the Beam is in play when it resolves. Against Dimir you need to watch out for Dimir House-Guard especially as that card is capable of countering the Beam by removing the target from play.

Sabertooth Alley Cat is another card I underrated initially I think. While he isn't always the best turn three play, in the mid-late game you can usually afford the two mana each turn to make him effectively unblockable against most decks. The combination of the cat and the Legionnaire gives some good endgame damage dealers to a colour combination that doesn't usually get much of that.

The Boros homeland – Sunhome, Fortress of the Legion – is another cards that is very good in your average Boros deck. It'll help deal a lot of damage with unblocked men while simultaneously making it hard for your opponent to block them in the first place. I'd be taking that over most of the second tier commons certainly.

There are plenty of solid commons to round out the deck with too, but I'm sure I'll go into more depth on those over the coming weeks.

Here's one of the better Boros decks I've drafted recently that was also a solid 3-0 deck:

Boros Draft Deck

Main Deck
40 cards

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Boros Garrison 7 Mountain 7 Plains 1 Sunhome, Fortress of the Legion <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 5px 0;"/> <p>16 lands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Boros Guildmage 1 Conclave Equenaut 1 Courier Hawk 1 Flame-Kin Zealot 1 Indentured Oaf 1 Nightguard Patrol 1 Sabertooth Alley Cat 1 Screeching Griffin 2 Skyknight Legionnaire 2 Thundersong Trumpeter 1 Veteran Armorer 2 Viashino Fangtail 2 War-Torch Goblin <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 5px 0;"/> <p>17 creatures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Boros Fury-Shield 1 Faith's Fetters 1 Fiery Conclusion 2 Galvanic Arc 1 Rally the Righteous 1 Wojek Siren <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 5px 0;"/> <p>7 other spells</p>
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This has multiples of the better commons but when there isn't another Boros drafter near you it's not uncommon for Skyknight Legionnaires and Viashino Fangtails to come round as fourth and fifth picks. A lot of the cards you want in your deck simply aren't splashable by the other decks, which suits you quite well obviously.

That wraps up this week. I'll be doing preliminary coverage of the remaining two guilds in my next article and then we can start exploring actually playing with all these new cards.

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