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**D**uring each of the four guild theme weeks we'll be doing this year, I want to talk about how development handled the specific guild.

It is fitting, then, that we start with the green-white Selesnya Conclave, as they required perhaps the least development work of the four *Ravnica* guilds.

## Leaving Well Enough Alone

Development's work is often measured by the cards we catch or fix. Sometimes a card or mechanic comes in from design a little too powerful, or weak, or clunky, or with its full potential unrealized, and the development team playtests and mulls over improvements for a while before finally changing things for the better. Other times, development's work is measured by what we add to the set. Many times holes in the design become apparent only after the set has been run through several weeks of sealed deck, draft, and Standard play, and development tries to tease out exactly what that thing *is* that's missing, and then figure out a way to seamlessly implement it, all within the constraints of the ever-looming deadlines for card art, editing, and typesetting.



But as far as the Selesnya Conclave is concerned, development's biggest success was the fact that we left well enough alone, recognizing all that design did correctly and letting it come to life. So often, as a developer, it is easy to give in to the temptation your power affords you, and change a card, only to realize later—sometimes *too* late—that the design team probably had it right. As the representative from the design team on the development team, I did my best to defend and explain every decision design had made—even those I didn't necessarily agree with—to development, but I felt my job was quite easy since I believed in what I was "selling." Obviously the other developers did as well.

Selesnya was lead designer Mark Rosewater's "baby." I suppose his own deckbuilding preferences lean towards making lots of little creatures and swarming his opponent; after all, he played green-white in most of our design sealed deck testing. He came with lots of great ways to play up both the token making of green-white, but also ways to make use of lots of creatures once you had made them. And all these ideas carried right through development.

Convoke is the one mechanic that didn't change functionally during development. Other pieces of the Selesnya pie that were present in the design file and made it through development relatively unscathed include:

- A higher than normal number of creatures with vigilance (and ways to grant vigilance), because of its synergy with convoke;
- Creatures with abilities that emulate convoke by tapping multiple creatures, including Sandsower, Nullmage Shepherd, and Root-Kin Ally;
- Mass toughness pumping (Veteran Armorer and Oathsworn Giant) to give token armies resiliency against pingers and Tremor- and Infest-like cards;
- Cards that let you sacrifice creatures for a cost, such as Caregiver and Perilous Forays. These effects are also present in the Golgari guild, as green-black also benefits from green's token-making ability;
- And cards with effects that scale based on having higher numbers of creatures in play, such as Overwhelm, Scion of the Wild, and Conclave Phalanx.

Most impressively, all seven of the gold (not hybrid) green-white commons and uncommons that made it to press were present in the design handoff file in close to their final forms.

## Minor Fixes

Okay, enough about development's action-through-inaction; let's talk about stuff we actually created or changed. Selesnya cards that development is responsible for:

- **Loxodon Hierarch.** Because green and white are both known for their efficient creatures, we wanted a really cost-effective mid-range fatty.
- **Autochthon Wurm.** Why not take convoke all the way out to its logical conclusion?

- **Hour of Reckoning.** There was no Wrath variant in the set, so we figured an expensive one with convoke would be somewhat interesting. Of course, who would want to Wrath when they had tons of creatures in play?



So we gave the tokens a free pass, making the card very much a "build-around-me" card, which most Wrath variants are not.

- **Chorus of the Conclave.** The legends that design had for green-white weren't quite grandiose enough.
- **Tolsimir Wolfblood.** More on this guy in a later article, when I talk about the cycles that development added.



We did some moving around as well, shifting gold cards to monocolored and vice versa to make sure the color pairs were focused enough. For instance, Scatter the Seeds, Concerted Effort, and Nullmage Shepherd were once green-white gold cards.

## Constructed Implications

As we were tuning the guilds for constructed play, one thing the developers did was talk about old popular decks in the relevant color combinations to figure out what angle we wanted the guild to take. Stuff we talked about included:

- Finkel-Prison, a control deck based on lots of artifacts, Armageddon, and Titania's Song;
- Erhnam-Geddon (and its children, Willow-Geddon and Blasto-Geddon), based on fat green monsters and Armageddon;
- Moa-Boa, a *Tempest-Urza's* Standard deck based on evasion creatures, Rancor, and, of course, Armageddon;
- Auratog Enchantress, a combo-style deck that benefited from Rancor;
- Turbo-Mulch, an Oath of Druids deck with Archangel as the kill;
- Rebel decks that splashed green for Wax/Wane;
- and Julian Nuijten's green-white Astral Slide deck.

To be honest, there wasn't much there to work with from a historical perspective. Most were based around one card or another that we simply weren't going to emulate in *Ravnica*—Armageddon,

Rancor, and Astral Slide for example. The Rebel engine was something we could work with, and it shows up (in spirit anyway) with all the good token-making cards in the guild.

Our green-white would have to be very creature-heavy, so we made sure to put good efficient creatures throughout the guild. The default green-white strategy is simply play bigger, better, and more creatures than your opponents. From there we made sure there were plenty of other cards to build around to customize your strategy—Glare of Subdual, Chord of Calling, Hour of Reckoning, Overwhelm, and so on. So if you're building a green-white deck using mostly *Ravnica* cards, I expect it to be very centered on creatures.

Of course, there are a few gems tossed in that we hope play nice with *Kamigawa* strategies as well, but those are best left to be discovered by you, the players.

Finally, here are some of the famous Multiverse comments from some Selesnya cards. I hope you know the lingo by now!

**Seed Spark** initially gave its caster X tokens, where X was the CMC of the target. It was chasing expensive artifacts and enchantments out of the environment.

PB 8/15: This card is good (was split up on two cards in the Invasion block).

HS 8/24 I like these "kicker" cards.

AF 10/5: So far, a savaging.

bs 10/11: upped cost to 3W for now.

MT 10/18: I'm scared to play artifacts still.

ps 10/18: seems good but fair at this level. WG should be good at this.

bs 10/19: nerfed.

bs 10/21: could be 2w.

HS 10/28 should be

AF 10/28: If we kill crittercast Naturalize, we should think about this being common.

AF 12/23: 1WW? White needs help.



**Hour of Reckoning** began life at a whopping 9 mana.

bs 11/1: added this wrath variant. AF 11/9: This card costs just a little too much to be playable. bs 11/19: now costs 7. was 9. bs 11/30: test. bs 12/21: this has been good. doesn't seem broken, but is reasonable. regeneration matters a little bit in this world.

**Transluminant** almost became a gimpy 1/1... but we opted to shrink Votary of the Conclave instead.

AF 7/21: I know the eot clause is grandfathered from Visions, but I like token-makers that create the tokens at eot. Rukh Egg is interesting because of its interactions with Wrath/Obliterate.

Del 1/6: Second time I've found a comment that refers to a correction not on the card. Watch that update button?

bs 1/12: from 2/2 to 1/1.

AF 1/17: Why this guy and not the bad spectral lynx? The other card is SO much more annoying in limited.

bs 1/20: was 1/1, is 2/2.

**Scatter the Seeds** was originally gold... and once a sorcery.

DAL 8/26: Quite powerful with other crittercast 8 drops.

bs 9/10: made worse... 5cc, sorcery.

AF 10/5: May be too nerfed now... WG didn't feel at all like the token guild to me in limited. Anyone else?  
 MT 10/6: WG doesn't have the token guild feel. Also limited feels sorcery based, this card at instant makes the crittercast cool.  
 bs 10/12: made an instant.  
 AF 10/29: Make this just green?  
 bs 11/1: for you, anything.



**Seeds of Strength** confused Paul Sottosanti.

ps 8/16: this is jarring.

**Loxodon Hierarchy** began life without his second ability... and he was boring.

MR (10/15/04): This doesn't feel rare.  
 AF 10/18: It isn't great in play, and it doesn't feel rare to me either. It needs one more word, maybe first strike?  
 ps 10/18: AF, "first strike" is two words.  
 bs 10/18: could be trample, untargetable, first strike, spirit link...  
 bs 10/19: added regen text.  
 bs 11/3: this is very good. activation should go to 2gw or so.  
 MP 12/16: One of the best anti creature beatdown cards of all time. Potentially should be a CCD mana cost.  
 bs 1/26: reduced sacrifice to GW from 2GW.

**Last Week's Poll:**

Which <i>Ravnica</i> events will/did you attend?		
Neither.	4137	32.6%
The prerelease only.	3324	26.2%
Both.	2961	23.4%
Store release events only.	2250	17.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12672</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Many people wrote to ask why I didn't include Online events. Simple—that's today's question.

**This Week's Poll:**

**Do you plan to play in *Ravnica* release events on *Magic Online*?**

Yes, and I also played in the real prerelease/release events.  
 Yes, and I didn't play in the real events.  
 No, but I played in the real prerelease/release events.  
 No, and I didn't play in the real events either.

