

Home > Games > Magic > Magicthegathering.com > Magic Arcana



Magic Arcana

Monday, March 27, 2006

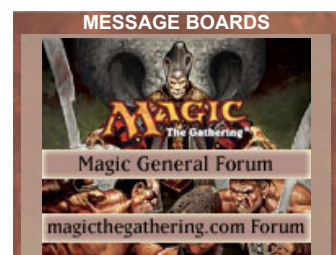
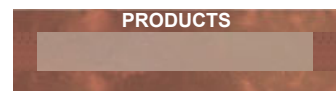
Guildpact style guide: Orzhov

A politically-charged compromise between White's devotion to community order and Black's thirst for individual power, the Orzhov Syndicate is a guild entirely committed to the establishment and maintenance of a power structure in Ravnica.

Today we take a look at the *Guildpact* style guide to see how the look and feel of the Orzhov illustrates this commitment as well as some other interesting details about them.

A *style guide* is a document of text and reference illustrations used to guide artists who work on a **Magic** set. Unless otherwise noted, the concept illustrations shown in this Arcana are all by *Guildpact's* lead conceptual artist, D. Alexander Gregory.

One of the most important aspects of the Orzhov is their ruling elite, the ghost council. Before they were a **tournament-caliber legendary creature**, they were conceived as a necromancy-supported patriarchy of mostly-undead guild bosses, sort of a cross between archbishops and mafia dons. See **Revenant Patriarch**, **Castigate**, **Dark Confidant** and of course **Ghost Council of Orzhova** for cards with looks at who's running the show of the guild.



W/B Spirit (left) by Todd Lockwood; Orzhov Patriarch sketches by D. Alexander Gregory

Under the patriarchs are layer after layer of lesser figures such as bishops, pontiffs, and **enforcers**. Key to the Orzhov gameplan is the use of a veneer of religion to cover up -- and provide moral justification for -- their power-mongering, criminal dealings. The pontiff concept (below, left) was a direct inspiration for the **Orzhov Pontiff** card, and you can see the idea of masks (again, another example of deception and the hiding of true purposes -- or is it just an expression of pious shame?) show up on **Agent of Masks**.



As for their lowest-level minions, the Orzhov employ both gargoyles -- which decorate their overblown guildhalls that serve as part cathedral and part bank -- and thrulls, which we've [seen in Arcana before](#).



[Discuss](#) on the message boards



[Magic Arcana](#) archive

