EPISODE 396: C21 - NEW CARD ANALYSIS (PART 1)

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1) UPKEEP STEP

2) MAIN TOPIC

3) TO THE LISTENERS

4) THE END STEP

5) CLEAN-UP PHASE

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1) INTRO JOSH & JIMMY

**@jfwong - @joshleekwai - @CommandCast**

*The preconstructed decks have been so much fun to look at but many of us are interested in the singles and staples inside. We are covering the WHITE, BLUE, and BLACK cards today. We will tell you which new cards from the commander product are the best and where they belong.*

\*\*CARD KINGDOM call-out #1\*\* \*\*ULTRA-PRO call-out #1\*\* \*\*PATREON – **Daniel Woodling**\*\*

*(Note: Daniel has done some great freelance graphic work and a few Game Knights card animations for us! He did the endpages for Prismari and Witherbloom.)*

2) **MAIN TOPIC: COMMANDER 2021 NEW CARD ANALYSIS (Part 1)**

*(Note: We’re only covering the COMMANDER PRODUCT today. The cards from the main set will have their own review videos released separately)*

**WHITE**

Angel of the Ruins

* Do *NOT* underestimate Plainscycling - it will get you lands like Raugrin Triome (which you can cycle away too), Prairie Stream, Sacred Foundry, etc.
* Flicker the heck out of this! Brago, Roon, etc. Similar cards like Angel of Sanctions for a GY focused / flicker strategy
* Exile two artifacts or enchantments usually costs 4 mana (Crush Contraband / Return to Dust) so you get a 5/7 flyer for three mana on top of that
* When you need artifacts and enchantments answered you want it done cheaply and hopefully at instant speed in reaction to a powerful effect - this feels like incidental value exile because of how much mana it costs

Archeomancer’s Map

* New white ramp staple - the white cultivate - kodama’s reach
* At its core is sorcery speed 2W, draw two Plains (White Divination).
* Artifact synergies with Osgir, the Reconstructor (sac it, then return it with two token copies of it)
* Get it into your GY then return with Sun Titan (to battlefield) or Trusty Packbeast / Treasure Hunter/Myr Retriever, etc to your hand
* Flicker it with Brago, double it up with Panharmonicon
* Since it only gets basic Plains, you probably won’t be playing this in 3-color decks as much
* You want to get more lands into your hand with Land Tax, Gift of Estates, Endless Horizons

Bronze Guardian

* Ward DOES stack, so making copies of this (Osgir, Cogwork Assembler, Saheeli’s Artistry/Sublime Epiphany) actually makes your artifacts nearly untargetable.
* This can get huge and protect your team. 5 mana is a bit spendy though.
  + Akiri Line Slinger / Cranial Plating
* Goes well in equipment builds where you can grant evasion. Just a single “sword of”`on this makes it a 4/5 double strike with double triggers, also synergises with artifacts that create more artifacts
  + Sword of Fire and Ice / Bloodforged Battle-axe / Goldvein Pick

Combat Calligrapher

* Inklings are a real card - 2/1 fliers mean business! This is strong if your Combat Calligrapher lives… but the moment it dies, they can definitely come swinging back at you. Find a way to protect this with Indestructible or Hexproof and it could definitely do some work in aggressive tables.
* Compare to the text on Varchild, Betrayer of Kjeldor - which gives the tokens back to you when Varchild dies. Compared to Rite of the Raging Storm - tokens get sacrificed at the end step.

Digsite Engineer

* “Karnstructs” are very powerful in artifact builds - strong rate compared to other token producers. 2 mana seems like a pricey amount on top of \*casting\* artifact spells - how often do you pay the 2 mana for the extra card from Mentor of the Meek?
  + Karn, Scion of Urza / Myrsmith / Retrofitter Foundry
* Is this good in decks that play lots of Artifact spells that are “do nothings” without the right setup? Depala, Pilot Exemplar (and added Dwarf synergy); any Equipment deck that wants to run a lot of equipments (Akiri, Fearless Voyager)

Excavation Technique

* This is a fun political spell - just know that an opponent’s promise to remove something doesn’t mean they’re actually targeting it… - the Copy is *optional*!
  + If you copy it, you get two copies (can target your own stuff btw) and then your opponent takes out a third nonland permanent.
  + Compare the downside to Swords to Plowshares (gain life) and Path to Exile (get a basic)
* Sorcery speed removal needs to be pretty good to compete - in Mono White this seems fine, but when Orzhov/Silverquill has almost every single answer under the sun available, this doesn’t feel playable otherwise.

Guardian Archon

* I like protection but it is just one permanent and one player - the pick a player and reveal the player is a lot of fun though! Flicker this or get this in at flash speed to protect your stuff. Being able to reset it with flickering (Ephemerate, Roon) seems like a lot of fun.
* Compare to: Emissary of Grudges (5R, but lets you re-target the spell or ability if its targeting you or a permanent you control), Stalking Leonin (2W, lets you exile target creature attacking you)

Monologue Tax

* We want to compare this to Smothering Tithe but it is nowhere near is good. Smothering Tithe + a wheel effect is all you need to think of when comparing the power level.
* How often will this generate you Treasure? In early turns, not as high chance, but seems like by turn 4 or 5, it’s going to net you at least 1-2 per turn rotation. Is it playable if it only gets you 1 treasure per turn rotation?

Promise of Loyalty

* Wrath of Goad!
* I like this board wipe and others like it because you can play around it
  + Tragic Arrogance / Slash the Ranks
* Won’t get rid of the worst creature on the board for other players, but more so for you. If that Creature has an activated ability that targets you though, tough luck.
* Many top commanders don't care who they attack because they are value generators - golos, muldrotha - Kenrith - Kess - Sisay - Kykar

Scholarship Sponsor

* This is a type of Balance that isn’t banned ;P
* Much better for mono color and two color decks
* Catch everyone up is a little group hug but also feels very white - like this ramp - I also like how this punishes non-basic mana bases - how many basics in your 4/5 color deck?
  + Make this an “only-me” effect with Aven Mindcensor / Opposition agent
* Always potential to go down on lands intentionally
  + Squandered Resources / Zuran Orb / Strip Mine / Devastating Summons

**BLUE**

Commander’s Insight

* Instant speed! With Partners that have both been cast: If X=1, then draw 3 for 4 mana. If X=2, then draw 4 for 5 mana (good). With solo Commander that has been cast once, if X=1, then draw 2 for 4 mana, if X=2, then draw 3 for 6 mana (not as good)
* Blue Sun's Zenith / Sphinx’s Revelation / Pull from Tomorrow
* Can target opponents like Blue Sun’s!

Curiosity Crafter

* Need to have a enough tokens to trigger this at least twice - not that hard to do but your deck needs to be built for this
  + Temmet, Vizier of Naktamun / Talrand / Kykar / Alela / Orvar (if you’re attacking)

Dazzling Sphinx

* Chaos Wand but through combat damage - doesn’t this feel like this card could be Red?
* This is a great combat damage trigger - imagine the worst spell you can hit - even basic ramp spells are fine but remember we are in a format that plays time stretch and expropriate
  + Unesh, Criosphinx Sovereign
  + Scheming Symmetry
  + Vega, the Watcher (whenever you cast a spell from anywhere other than your hand, draw a card)
  + Blade of Selves

Inspiring Refrain

* This is similar to a cycle from Future Sight (Arc Blade, Chronomantic Escape, Cyclical Evolution, Festering March, Reality Strobe) - we didn’t see those cards played now, Inspiring Refrain is probably too bad to play now.
* Recurring Suspend Divination - very cool design but a bad card - divination is unplayable
* Waiting three turns to draw 2 is bad, waiting 6 turns to draw your free 2 and finally “get value “ is just too long.

Muse Vortex

* It’s difficult to know what this will actually do. Unscientifically I (DJ) just picked up my spells matter deck that has 33 instants and sorceries in it. So if I cast X for 3 it would cost 5 mana and I am likely to hit a spell (but not certain) the chances that I get to cast it for free is actually quite low only about 1/3 of the time. 5 mana cast a 3 drop from your top 3 is VERY bad, 5 mana draw one or two is bad. I can’t see how this card could ever be good.
* Huge mana into X makes it closer to a spell tutor which might make it playable
  + Mizzix of the Izmagnus / Zaxara, the Exemplary / Rosheen Meanderer
* Cast 0 cmc spells
  + Restore Balance / Ancestral Vision
* Feels worse than epic experiment (which has flaws)
* Missing spells going into your hand is decent upside - in a spells matter deck this could act as card draw (you MAY cast the card you exiled) - but Sorcery speed hurts.

\*\*\* MIDROLL BREAK \*\*\*

Perplexing Test

* Instant speed is great - Evacuation is a very strong card, this potentially hoses a token deck. Anything that smells like Cyclonic Rift means it’s already pretty powerful.
  + Talrand (keep my tokens, goodbye to yours)
  + Anti Kiki-Jiki shenanigans
  + Orvar (bounce everything, keep your copies)

Replication Technique

* This could be Blue ramp? 5 mana copy two lands (target Permanent)
* I can imagine that this will be easier to “demonstrate” than other spells because not everyone has something good they want to copy all of the time. I always wanted “tempt with” cycle to be better, I like this take on the cycle a lot
* Play this after a Cyclonic Rift and Demonstrate it :)
* Making tokens can be good because of synergies like doubling and populating and Perplexing test
  + Tempt with Reflections

Sly Instigator

* Forcing combat is fun, goad is a great mechanic
* This does not let you send small creatures to their deaths because they gain unblockable
* This still locks down the biggest creatures and prevents them from coming at you while dealing damage to another person.
* Bloodthirsty blade goes on anything for 1 and can go in any deck. Do you want another worse copy?
* An Icy Manipulator (4 cmc, 1 to activate) is not really playable even if I can imagine some fun situations
  + Icy Manipulator / Bloodthirsty Blade

Spawning Kraken

* Sea Monster decks
  + Koma’s Coils are serpents / Serpent of Yawning Depths
  + Whelming Wave / Slinn Voda, the Rising Deep
  + Aesi

Theoretical Duplication

* Answers multiple creatures and cheating into play
  + Primal Surge / Tooth and Nail / Living Death
* You get ETBs
* The situation where you are holding this up waiting for something good or just wish you had a counterspell feels bad
* Token decks will like this
  + Brudiclad, Telchor Engineer

**BLACK**

Author of Shadows

* 5 cmc to draw a card and disrupt the OPs graveyard is good. There is a stong level of card selection when pulling from OPs GY. Could access a better card than Gonti
* Difficult to gain advantage through blink and reanimator because it takes out the GY.
* GY disruption is better than anyone thinks. Don’t leave it out of your decks
  + Gonti Lord of Luxury /

Blight Mound

* This just has to create three tokens before it’s pretty good. I can see that scenario.
* Making tokens on death are strong played cards in sacrifice and aristocrats strategies
  + Pawn of Ulamog / Teysa Orzhov Scion
* Being an enchantment is sometimes an upside and sometimes a downside in these strategies - harder to interact with but also does not trigger all these synergies itself
* Getting extra damage through with your pests (power boost and menace) is also good in aristocrats and sacrifice decks because every damage counts

Bold Plagiarist

* It doesn’t even steal the counters - has no evasion is only a conditional big creature even if it starts working really well
  + Thief of Blood
* It’s cute if you are sharing counters with OP
  + Shadrix Silverquill / Orzhov Advokist
* Only happy if it goes crazy against an OPs Kathril deck
  + Kathril, Aspect Warper

Cunning Rhetoric

* One or more creatures means this might deter “chip damage” but it will not stop large attacks. In fact, I have had OPs purposefully attack me with more creatures because as long as I’m getting to draw a card each additional creature attacks without a drawback
* Similar effect Ever-watching threshold is unplayable - I REALLY tried b/c is was my preview card
  + Ever-Watching Threshold

Essence Pulse

* Would rather have mutilate in monoblack, toxic deluge in any deck, or damnation for the assured board wipe
  + Mutilate / Toxic Deluge / Damnation
* This would need to be included for flavor reasons or give me lots of other benefit for incidental lifegain - I could imagine this in a Karlov deck where you almost certainly dodge karlov while you take out smaller enemies

Incarnation Technique

* Self mill is nice but this effect at 5 cmc is way overcosted you need to demonstrate this and leverage your OP to have this feel good to play
* Many commanders interact with the GY and love self milll
  + Syr Konrad, the Grim / Meren of Clan Nel Toth / Chainer, Dementia Master
* Better than the Tempt with Immortality because you have more control
  + Tempt with Immortality

Keen Duelist

* People are scared of these “bob” effects but it’s GREAT.- Roberta
  + Duskmantle Seer
* High CMC cards and topdeck control to do more damage - Yuriko does that along with other “big mana” generals
  + Yuriko, the Tiger's Shadow / Belbe, Corrupted Observer / Rakdos, Lord of Riots

Marshland Bloodcaster

* A lot of hoops even if the effect is powerful - 5 cmc, mana + tap ability - this will play very clunky
* Paying life for mana in black is not new and we have seen it implemented in more powerful ways
  + Bolas’s Citadel / K'rrik, Son of Yawgmoth

Stinging Study

* Interesting way to interact with command zone - I like it
* Do we want a 5 cmc commander - Promise of Power is fine but not a staple - I have cast Wretched Confluence for 5 mana draw 3 lose 3 at instant speed many times.
* I think I want 5 mana draw 7 lose 7 - this would feel close to my first activation of Necropotence
* Instant speed is really nice on black card draw
  + Promise of Power / Wretched Confluence / Necropotence

Veinwitch Coven

* The body is good even if it is weak in commander - sometimes getting damage in matters there are also menace decks
  + Sygg River Cutthroat / Labyrinth Raptor
* 1 mana raise dead is the right mana for the rate - do this once and it’s very average a 4 cmc gravedigger (unimpressive) a couple times and this is a powerful card.
  + Gravedigger

**MOST POWERFUL NEW MONO-COLORED CARD?**

Archeomancer’s Map

Archeomancer’s Map

**FAVORITE NEW MONO-COLORED CARD?**

Promise of Loyalty

Author of Shadows

3) **TO THE LISTENERS:**

What are your favorite cards from this list? What commander decks are they going in?

\*\*CARD KINGDOM CALL-OUT #2\*\*

\*\*ULTRA PRO #2\*\*

4) **THE END STEP**

Something cool outside the world of Magic. None. Too much bonus content coming out.

5) CLEAN-UP STEP

-Our editing, graphics and logistics team is **Manson Leung, Craig Blanchette, Ashlen Rose, Ladee Danger, Alfred Estaca, Josh Murphy, Jake Boss, Patrick Nan, Jordan Pridgen, Arthur Meadowcraft, Sam Waldow and Gaurav Gulati.**

-Special thanks to **Geoffrey Palmer** for the living card animations (**@LivingCardsMTG**)