



Cult of the Dragon



by Dale Donovan



Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®



Cult of the Dragon

by Dale Donovan

*"And naught will be left save shuttered thrones with no rulers.
But the dead dragons shall rule the world entire, and . . ."*

*Sammaster First-Speaker
Founder of the Cult of the Dragon*



Dedication

To my mother and my father, who always encouraged me, no matter how seemingly strange my interests may have appeared. Thanks to you both I had the chance to pursue—and obtain—my dream. While it may seem curious to dedicate a book about a bunch of psycho cultists to one's parents, I figured that, of all people, you two would understand.

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Introduction

I scented the mammal even before its petty magic delivered it outside my high, mountainous home.

This invasion of my domain, this violation of my privacy, would not go unpunished. As I contemplated the most efficacious means of destroying this intruder, it used another bit of minor mammalian magic. I was of course prepared for for eventualitY, but unlike most of these self-proclaimed "civilized races," this one did not attack, blindly rushing to its doom.

Instead, the magic carried its feeble voice to me. It spoke—in Auld Wyrn-ish, no less—begging entrance to my lair, promising the mightiest of treasures should I deign to listen. Intrigued only by the insect's knowledge of the one true tongue, I allowed it to attend my personal glory. I noted that it even followed the old forms for begging an audience.

It entered on its knees, its head bowed, offering before it a portable dimensional anomaly, the boundary of which was formed by a simple tanned hide and draw-string. As the mammalian insect crawled toward me, it praised my kin for our power, our art, and our graceful strength — I thought the last appropriate as the buffoon disrupted two of my smaller caches during his awkward approach. (Note: Be certain to thoroughly recount, stack, and tabulate those again.)

Noting my displeasure, the human (I care not about mammalian genders) apologized profusely, again using the correct forms, and opened the anomaly, from which poured a not insignificant number of gems. Of the lot, most were pitifully small and without merit, but a few sapphires caught my eye. I therefore determined to listen, as the human was obviously working up its courage for some sort of oration it assumed I would find captivating.

I do not recall most of the mammal's babbling, but it spoke reasonably well of my power, glory, and reputation, and tendered the few hundred pounds of gems as an offering to my patience.

Then, however, it made reference to and praised "my superior"—its words, certainly not mine—the so-called suzerain of Anauroch, Susseth-lasis. My righteous anger flared then, and I pinned the fool to the floor beneath a single claw of my left forepaw. As I considered making a brief meal of this mammalian, I asked it, "Give me a reason not to kill you where you lie, you warm-blooded flea."

The mammal recanted its error and again begged to be allowed to speak. (Even for a mammal, this one did beg well.)

It had seemingly been sent by a group of fellow mammals calling themselves by the presumptuous title of the Cult of the Dragon. The insect told of this group's founder and how this human had foreseen that the

bipedal races will one day (sooner than even it knows) fall before our draconic might. Such tremendous powers of insight this "founder" possessed! As if any hatchling does not know this undeniable truth!

The human then continued, with some difficulty, likely due to the weight of my formidable claw upon its frail chest, and told of this cult and how it was preparing for that day and —

I understood before the insect even finished, of course. This cult seeks to worship me, somehow perceiving as well as I the true power and cunning I possess and will someday (soon, very soon) wield across the face of this land. There will be a reckoning when I tear down the braggart and fool, Susseth-lasis. Then I shall rule the forbidding blight of Anauroch, and from there stretch my wings over— but I am getting ahead of myself. Other times remain for such plans. Now, perhaps, I will allow the mammalian insect to speak again to me (with proper offerings for my patience) and prattle on, telling me more of this cult and what it may well do for me."

—From the magical Libram of Recording of Malvgris, very old blue dragon of southern Anauroch, circa 1351 DR

This book contains information on the Cult of the Dragon for the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting. This product details the history of the Cult and its founder, Sammaster First-Speaker, recent happenings within the Cult, the status of the Cult's operations and its individual cells, its magic and magical items, its goals and the plans for achieving them, its foes and enemies, and of course, its dracoliches, perhaps the most terrifying form of all draconic life (or unlife in this case).

This book is for the eyes of Dungeon Masters. Players who read the secrets contained within not only risk spoiling many surprises for themselves, but also risk the wrath of their DMs. They have been warned.

The secret society known as the Cult of the Dragon has existed in the Realms for over 400 years. The primarily human membership seeks to elevate evil dragonkind to rule all of Toril as its dominion. When possible, the Cults transform powerful, willing evil dragons into dracoliches.

The Cult's main activities include serving as an intelligence-gathering and communications network for the evil dragons of Faerûn and the Cult's dracoliches. Cult members regularly visit the lairs of evil dragons, praising them effusively and telling them of the destiny Sammaster First-Speaker proclaimed for them: rulership over all. Cult members contribute large amounts of treasure to these dragons' hoards, offer any assistance at their disposal (healing potions and spells or an exchange of spells and other magical knowledge), enlarge or otherwise expand the dragons' lairs, add mechanical or magical traps to the lairs, and generally work to persuade these dragons to actively cooperate with the Cult. Cult members also make all necessary



preparations for those dragons that do consent to become a dracoliche.

In exchange for the Cult's services, its members ask "cooperative" dragons for permission to use their lairs as emergency shelters and for a promise of aid should the Cult ever call on them using the Cult's *rings of dragons*. (Most often this means combating some foe of the Cult.) Cult members also guard and tend any eggs or hatchlings that may be present in the dragons' lairs when the dragons so desire (such as when they leave for a substantial period of time to hunt or raid).

The Cult is a fractious organization comprised of numerous independent cells across Faerûn. Unlike such organizations as the Harpers or the Zhentarim that possess some sense of unity due to centralized command structures and powerful, charismatic leaders, some cells of the Cult are almost as likely to be at each other's throats as they are to be working together. The lack of both a headquarters (or even a predominant region of influence) and the presence of a single strong leader keeps the Cult and its powerful allies, the dracoliches, from achieving (or at least maintaining) the great power and influence to which they might otherwise rise. Indeed, only the Cult's founder, Sammaster First-Speaker, was able to hold the Cult together as a unified whole beneath him.

Sammaster was a mage who lived well over 500 years ago and eventually became one of Mystra's Chosen. This touch of divine power was too much for Sammaster's mind, and he was eventually driven insane, unlike the Chosen of the modern Faerûnian era. Mystra removed her touch, but the damage was done already and proved irreversible. The Goddess of All Magic could not cure Sammaster (or refused to for her own inscrutable reasons), nor did she put him out of his madness and misery, an act of restraint that, though it seemed merciful at the time, in retrospect would have prevented much grief and bloodshed over the intervening years.

In any case, the delusional Sammaster was convinced he had some special insight into the powers of the Realms (the gods) and Toril's future. He set about translating (or retranslating in many cases) the works of several legendary oracles and sages, among them Maglas, author of the prophetic tome, *The Chronicle of Years to Come*. In one particular passage Sammaster found the genesis for what would become the Cult of the Dragon. Below is the passage as Elminster and most other reputable sages over the centuries have translated it:

"And naught will be left save shattered thrones, with no rulers but the dead. Dragons shall rule the world entire, and . . ."

Sammaster the Mad translated the passage thusly:

"And naught will be left save shattered thrones with no rulers. But the dead dragons shall rule the world entire, and . . ."

This revelation lit a fire in Sammaster's demented mind and led to his organizing a band of followers to whom he passed on his teachings in a magical book called the *Tome of*



the Dragon. These followers then spread his word, and eventually the group took on the appellation "Cult of the Dragon." It created its first dracoliches in 902 DR.

In time, Sammaster was slain, but he had prepared for his death and was able to attain lichdom for himself. Most tale-tellers and hedge-row sages believe that years later Sammaster's undead form was itself killed as well, since some members of the Cult have stated that the founder is dust in some forgotten tomb. Clearly this means that that the mad lich plays no current role in the actions or rulership of the Cult, but sages with more in-depth knowledge—or more paranoid natures—have speculated on what else this statement might imply.

Regardless, the Cult of the Dragon has continued on without its founder. His disciples have wended their way across the length and breadth of Faerûn, and his teachings have insinuated themselves into the greedy and insecure hearts and minds of the weak-willed, the unethical, the grasping, the power-hungry, and those who seek elevation to wealth or power through covert means rather than honest hard work. But as with any philosophy the farther the tenets the Cult is organized upon have spread, the more variations and interpretations of them have sprung up and the greater number of schisms have formed within the Cult. Thus, many of the Cult's cells today proffer divergent versions of the Cult's history and its final destiny. What this destiny is remains to be determined by how a DM wishes to use the Cult of the Dragon in his or her FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign.



History

Again my Thoughts have been disrupted, my plans for further accumulation of glory intruded upon by Lackeys of This Cult of The Dragon. As The first visitor had stated years earlier additional insects would approach me. This group was The Largest Thus far, a veritable pack of the bipeds, seemingly of divergent races (since Their scents were inconsistent). They traveled overland to bask in my glory as They came not magically prepared for battle (or treachery). In any case, There was much scurrying and clattering—to my ears—above my home before They dared enter. When They did, all bowed and scraped sufficiently to gain admittance.

As I had correctly expected, This pack came from This cult of Theirs. This time, They offered a more sizable and proper offering of gold and other valuables. Their so-called mage—I could smell the petty magics and components he carried, mired liberally with sweat and fear, doubtless due to my imposing majesty—also offered me several petty magical items and spell scrolls it had written itself. As if That fact were to impress me! While These offers were trivial by and large, I accepted them. Why a member of my glorious race would need magical items or spells created by these insects is beyond me, but I demonstrated that I too can be gracious, following the ancient forms of converse and exchange.

Having accepted Their paltry gifts, I was now obliged to listen to Their awkward orations. At first,

The mageling spoke of further magics, power, and The mightiest of all treasures (That phrase again) This cult of Theirs could bring me in the future—if I allowed them to continue their association with my august presence. As Their insipid imaginations cannot begin to perceive The grandeur of my own designs, I refuse to record Their promises.

Soon another, This one likely a warrior from its accouterments, took a turn—perhaps Their mammalian brains allow them to memorize only so much information at once—to remind me of The censure I had received from That overreaching fool, Sussethilas. The insect saved its worthless life by stating the obvious fact that I was fully within my rights as Draconic Lord of my domain to take any pathetic biped caravan I wish. How was I to be aware that The deluded, self-proclaimed “suzerain of Anauroch” had claimed its contents? Did it not pass under my very nose? Was not such an affront to my power? Was the mammalian insects’ claim of his protection to be believed? Those insects would spout any lies and proclamations They thought would spare them a hideous death at my claws and teeth! Was the threat of retribution from some far-off keep full of these insects to have dissuaded my furious anger? I think not.

Even these cult insects could see my actions were justified. They stated that they shared my outrage, and





That Their offering was meant, in Their meager way, to replace The penalty The black-hearted, arrogant suzerain had seized from my hoard. Perhaps These insects do have some sense after all.

"As you have been wronged, Great One, Let us Tell you of another great wrong, one done to another destined for glory and greatness and immortality," such was how began They the story of This cult's founder, one referred to—with almost too much reverence for beings in my presence—as Sammaster First-Speaker. Rather than record Their tale directly, I summarize it below. It is not an awfully tedious tale and sparkles here and there with some epic elements—though it is, typically, full of the mammalian preoccupation with, their own position in these lands.

This Sammaster was an—apparently—important and influential mage born in excess of five centuries ago by the mammals' calendar. He arose from meager beginnings, using his guile and might to overcome those other mammals that stood in his way. After a time, his greatness was recognized by the insects' gods. Their goddess of magic granted This Sammaster a touch of her power. This divine touch led it, er—him, I believe—to even greater glories and allowed him insight into the future that none others possessed.

Such was This mamm-, ah, man's greatness that the very same gods that favored him turned against him. They seemingly feared both his still-increasing power and his astounding insight into the mists of time to come, and so the mistress of magic removed her touch from This Sammaster.

While some would think such an act a major setback, it was not so for This Sammaster. Instead, his mind freed of the meddling presence of a petty godling, he made himself immortal (not an inconsiderable feat, especially for a mammal), the better to pursue his lofty goals. It was also during this time that he uncovered a prophecy deliberately obscured by past "scholars" too fearful to realize the awesome truth . . ."

—From the magical Libram of recording of Malygris, very old blue dragon of southern Anauroch, circa 1355 DR

The Story of Sammaster

"The tale that is Sammaster's life is an incomplete one. Most of the records of Sammaster's deeds are lost to us in modern-day Faerûn, since they were destroyed after his fall from grace among the Chosen of Mystra. So heinous was his crime that Azuth (acting as the agent of Mystra's will) declared that every mention of Sammaster and his service to the Lady of Mysteries be stricken from all magely books, scrolls, and other forms of record.

"As a result, the portrait of Sammaster the man and the mage that can be reconstructed today is fragmentary at best. Interviews with such individuals who lived during Sammaster's time (and who were willing to speak of such events), recovered (and often reconstructed by me) personal logs and diaries, divinations, and the usual foraging and leg-work have produced the following. Speculation on my part has been kept to a minimum and is clearly noted as such. All that follows may not be true, but none is deliberate falsehood.

"Another reason this man's tale may not be fully told is that, according to some of my sources, Sammaster yet lives. Or, perhaps it would be more accurate to state that Sammaster may not yet be truly and finally laid to his eternal rest."

—Oracle Veshal Questa,
Sibylite of Savras and Harper,
from her report to Belhuar Thantarh, 1370 DR

No one knows exactly where Sammaster, called First-Speaker among the members of his so-called Cult, was born or under what circumstances, and the identities and the disposition of his parents are also mysteries. It is known that Sammaster was an only child and that his parents passed away due to unknown circumstances while he was still little more than a babe. Cult mythology attributes him with a varied and portentous parentage, including claiming that his father was a noble, a necromancer, or a pirate, and his mother an other-planar fiend of some sort in disguise, an incarnation of the goddess Sharess, an escaped slave, a wood nymph, or a priestess from Mulhorand. Most of these theories are held as utter poppycock by most reputable sages, though claims of nobility to a greater or lesser degree or that one or both parents were pirates or escaped slaves are vague enough to be untraceable. One assertion that Sammaster's familial line can be traced back to the height of Myth Drannor seems specious at best. Such claims are most likely the hopeful musings of a Cult chronicler than a conclusion drawn from any solid evidence.

Sammaster's birthdate is lost, but best guesses as to the year of his birth place it on or near 800 DR, the Year of the Black Fist. Sembia is a strong contender for his original home since the earliest roots do grow the deepest and Sammaster's Cult of the Dragon has maintained an almost uninterrupted presence there since the Cult's founding. Other possibilities for the home of Sammaster's youth include the Dalelands and the North. Sammaster was active in both regions in later periods of his life and could have been drawn to them by childhood memories and youthful familiarity.

Little is known of Sammaster after his parents' untimely demise. It is likely he was raised by relatives or friends of his parents. As is often the case with orphans, the young boy's life was likely less than pleasant. Pawned off onto some little-caring great uncle or such, many orphans suffer neglect if not outright abuse until such time as they can (or are forced to) make their own way in the world; such treatment might explain, though not excuse, Sammaster's later behaviors.



Sammaster the Apprentice

In any case, no records exist of Sammaster the boy until after he passed the traditional age of apprenticeship. It is at this time that mention of a young man named Sammaster with “much magical potential” appears in the logs of the journeyman mage, Mnethos. Mnethos was a mage, a caravan guard, and an itinerant adventurer throughout much of Faerûn in the early ninth century DR and was, in all other ways, a minor mage of little historical import. The first mention of Sammaster, who Mnethos took on as an apprentice despite the lad’s advanced age for such a role, occurs during a long term of Mnethos’ caravan guard duty. Mnethos makes no notes as to where he found the young Sammaster, but it is known that the traveling mage is said to have visited such diverse locales as Hillsfar, the region of what later became Shadowdale, Chondathan (Saerloon), Marsember, Iriaebor, Berdusk, Scornubel, Baldur’s Gate, Nimoar’s Hold (Waterdeep), Yartar, and Silverymoon during this period.

Mnethos recorded in his log notes (a surprising number of which have survived, mainly full of tedious accounting) that his young apprentice was a tall youth, thin to the point of being gaunt, with dark hair and a pale complexion, and that he possessed a nervous, excitable disposition and highly acute senses that often resulted in agitation, an uneasy stomach, and even fits of trembling. The boy, noted Mnethos, was irritable, easily agitated even by simple unexpected noises, and was occasionally possessed of an extreme rage when he was denied or frustrated. He was also ill often, with bouts of sneezing, coughing, and labored breathing, though simple herbal concoctions allayed this problem somewhat.

Despite this, Mnethos noted the boy’s fierce intelligence was plain in his large, somber, brown eyes. He also had a driving ambition to learn and master magic. The boy regularly missed meals or even lost sleep in order to better learn a new magical principle or minor cantrip. This concentrated ambition was remarkable in one so young, noted Mnethos.

Sammaster’s apprenticeship was unremarkable other than that the boy, soon a young man, was a very quick study. Not only did Sammaster learn the rudiments of the Art far more quickly than most apprentices, his travels with Mnethos also opened his eyes to the diversity and wonders of life in Faerûn. In addition, the young mageling learned much of the caravaner’s trade and gained considerable knowledge of the geography of the lands of the North and the Heartlands.

It was during this time that Mnethos’ log notes that the young man became increasingly fascinated by the underlying theory of the Art, the whys and wherefores of how magic works. Of course, he knew of the mystical Weave and its keeper, the Lady Mystra. But this was the time that Sammaster first came to perceive the works of the Lady in all things about him. Introduced to her formal worship by Mnethos, Sammaster became an ardent follower of the Mother of All Magic.

Journeyman and Mastery

From that point on, the Lady of Mysteries seemed to smile on the young mage, and his career blossomed. His studies

accelerated, and Sammaster eventually left the service of Mnethos. Without the older mage’s guidance, the young mage’s eccentricities blossomed into fully chaotic patterns. Restless (perhaps from his travels as a youth), Sammaster never stayed in any one area too long. Sources also attribute him with chaotic behavior in his relationships as well. Children conceived from any of these early relationships are unknown, but if there was issue from any of Sammaster’s trysts, there could be hundreds of descendants of the mage roaming Toril, oblivious to their unique heritage.

Sammaster journeyed incessantly, seeking out new mentors from whom he could learn, only to soon outstrip them and move on in search of new challenges. The only constant in his life was magic, Sammaster’s first and only true love.

Sammaster’s magical progress was astounding. Despite his late start and his poor health, he reached the skill of an archmage before a gray hair ever sprouted from his scalp. He delved further and further into the theories of magic and the mysteries of the Weave and its Lady. Before the age of 40, he discovered, rediscovered, or improved upon numerous spells (some of which are now known by more common names, such as *squaring the circle*, *lower resistance*, and the *augmentation*, *dilation*, and *far reaching* series of spells) in the advanced theory of magic known as “metamagic,” an amazing feat for one so young. (Some say that he was first inducted into the theories by an unknown member of the mysterious sisterhood of incantatrixes, a close-mouthed group of wizardesses of mighty reputation.)

The Lady of Mysteries certainly smiled on the now-potent mage whose rise to power was so rapid. And Sammaster was grateful to “his Lady” as he referred to the Mother of All Magic. He seemed to know that she favored him and that much greatness awaited him. Unfortunately neither the mage nor the goddess could see what else the future held for Sammaster. All Sammaster could see was his Lady, and she soon enough rewarded his devotion, ingenuity, and industrious spell creation.

Sammaster the Chosen

At or around the natural age of 50 (Sammaster had been using *potions of longevity* and other age-retarding magics for some time, despite the inherent dangers), the Goddess of All Magic appeared to Sammaster while he was in the Dalelands not far from the ruins of Myth Drannor. Our Lady of Spells came to the mage in appreciation of his magical genius with a proposal—if all went well.

Sammaster saw his most fervent dream, his most desperate desire, appear before his very eyes. He was both awestruck and smitten with passion as he fell to his knees and wept upon Mystra’s feet. Raising him to meet her gaze, Mystra responded to his unspoken question and swept him into her embrace. They spent a tenday together, and at the end of that period, Mystra asked this young magical genius if he thought he was worthy enough and strong enough to carry a part of her divine power within him.

Not knowing exactly what our Lady of Mysteries meant, Sammaster nonetheless accepted. He then became the first mage to become one of the Chosen of Mystra since the Seven Sisters many years before. When asked why he



had been Chosen, Mystra acknowledged his advancement of the theories of metamagic. In addition, she alluded to the fact that she had some foreknowledge that one of her Chosen would die in battle and that Sammaster would need to be ready to “take her place” when the time came. (With the benefit of hindsight, we can now conclude that Mystra was referring to Syluné. As detailed later, Sammaster did not reach that conclusion, but he did remember this prophecy.)

Before she took her leave of him, the Goddess directed Sammaster to Shadowdale and Elminster’s Tower to better learn to use and manage all his new abilities. As he traveled to Shadowdale, Sammaster reviewed the past tendar’s events in his mind and came to the conclusion that he *and* his Lady were deeply in love with each other. Alas, like so many, Sammaster mistook his own piety and brief passion for true love, something found rarely enough between mortals, much less between a god and any one worshiper. Of course the Lady of Mysteries loved Sammaster as she does all who revere her and her gift, and perhaps somewhat more as one of her Chosen, but he did not hold her heart in his hands by any means. Sammaster did not—could not—see that. His intellectual passion for magic had become a driving mental and physical passion for his goddess.

Sammaster and Elminster

Little is known of the time Sammaster and Elminster spent together. Although the Sage of Shadowdale did provide some information for this report, he became quite reticent regarding his personal relationship with Sammaster. Between this reluctance to speak and the recent departure of Elminster’s highly valued scribe, Lhaeo, to take the throne of the reunited country of Tethyr, I had little recourse but to search for more details myself. I was able to reach the following conclusions from what I found amid the shambles Elminster’s Tower has become without an orderly presence such as his former scribe.

Sammaster and Elminster did not get along well at all. While both fulfilled Mystra’s desires of them—Elminster to teach the younger man and Sammaster to learn from the older—the personalities of the two archmages clashed. Little need be said of Elminster’s obstreperous nature. It also seems Sammaster was deeply awed by recent events, and his sincere (and misguided) emotions regarding his relationship with Mystra prevented Elminster and him from bonding as friends: Mystra was always in Sammaster’s thoughts as he learned to master her gifts and often in his conversation as well.

The situation between the two only worsened after Elminster rather bluntly pointed out to Sammaster (after the umpteenth overly romanticized proclamation) that Mystra’s lieutenant, Azuth, already fulfilled the role of the goddess’s confidante and consort. (Note that this Lady of Mysteries was the one who later perished during the Time of Troubles. Her relationship with Azuth was well documented by both the churches of Mystra and Azuth at that time.) It can be speculated that Sammaster irrationally linked his disappointment and annoyance over this revelation to his existing personal dislike for Elminster. Thereafter, Sammaster spoke little and applied himself almost



Sammaster as a young man.



ceaselessly to his education (probably to as quickly absent himself from the Old Mage's presence as possible), and he mastered his powers as one of the Chosen as quickly as he had all other forms of magic. He left the company of Elminster after but three seasons to again take up his own road in service to the Lady of Mysteries.

Sammaster's abilities at this time are described below.

Sammaster (hm M19 & Chosen of Mystra): AC 5 (17 DEX, *ring of protection* +2); MV 12; hp 38; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg by spell/weapon; SA bonus spells; SD spell immunities, +2 to all saving throws (*ring of protection* +2); SZ M (5' 10"); AL CN.

S 8, D 17, C 25 (12), I18, W 14, Ch 13.

Special Equipment: *ring of protection* +2, *ring of free action*, *boots of striding and springing*.

Spells: 5/5/5/5/5/3/3/3/1, not including bonus spells.

Notes: *Bonus Spells:* *shield*, *sense shifting**, *alacrity**, *minor spell turning**, *lower resistance**, *extension III*, *steal enchantment**, *Serten's spell immunity*, *energy drain*.

Spell Immunities: *magic missile*, *forget*, *fireball*, *ice storm*, *magic jar*, *death spell*, *finger of death*, *trap the soul*, *power word, kill*.

**Tome of Magic* spells.

Powers of the Chosen: *Latent Powers:* Each of Mystra's Chosen has a Constitution score of 25 and enjoys all the associated benefits, including automatic system shock and resurrection survival as well as the regeneration of 1 hit point per turn. The regeneration ability applies even to lost limbs and organs, which can be regrown over time. (In the statistical listing for each of the Chosen of Mystra, the character's original, unaltered Constitution score is given in parentheses.) The Chosen are immune to all disease and other afflictions as if they were constantly under the effects of an *elixir of health*; dying from natural causes is an impossibility. They never need to sleep and can survive without food or drink for up to seven days at a time (as though benefiting from a *vitality* potion).

The Chosen are immune to the wizard spell *disintegrate* and all similar magic. They receive a +5 bonus to all saving throws vs. spell and a +3 bonus to saving throws vs. the breath weapons of dragons. They can *detect magic* at will out to a range of 90 feet or the individual's line of sight, whichever is greater.

All Chosen are aware whenever their own names (including nicknames, titles, etc.) are spoken by someone anywhere on Toril and can also hear the next nine words uttered by the same speaker. The ability to hear these words is always in effect unless it is disengaged, which is often the case when one's need to concentrate outweighs the desire to eavesdrop.

Each of the Chosen can invoke various forms of protection upon his or her person, including that equivalent to a *ring of warmth*, a *ring of mind shielding*, a *water breathing* potion, or a *protection from gas* scroll. These protections can be called upon at will, but only one of the effects can operate in any round.

Each individual is entitled to select (and all of them have selected) one specific wizard spell from each spell level to which he or she is immune. This immunity extends to a priest version of the spell as well, if such exists (the reversed form of *remove curse*, for example).

Manifested Powers: All of the following powers require an act of will to be used. An individual may either use one of these powers or cast a spell normally in a round—but not both.

Once every 7 turns, a Chosen can unleash from within his or her body a beam of magical whitish flame known as *silver fire* (which is also used as a general name for the overall power invested in each of her Chosen by the goddess). This beam is 5 feet wide and can be made to extend as far as 70 feet if desired. No magical or physical barrier has been discovered that can stand up against it, and the beam inflicts 4d12 points of damage (no saving throw allowed) on all beings struck by it. Any nonliving object touched by the beam must make a saving throw vs. magical fire to avoid being destroyed.

An individual also can choose to expel the *silver fire* in the shape of a cloud that fills a cone-shaped area 5 feet in diameter at its base, up to 70 feet long, and up to 70 feet across at its widest. This "silver cloud" causes no damage, but banishes dead magic areas forever, instantly restoring such an area's connection with the Goddess of All Magic. This use of the *silver fire* is extremely rare, since Mystra considers it an emergency action only.

The *silver fire* also can be activated within the body of a Chosen to purge all external magical and psionic compulsions from that person. And, once per day, an individual can *teleport without error* to the last location where he or she used the *silver fire* in any of its forms.

Mystra grants each of her Chosen the ability to permanently know one spell of each spell level the individual is able to use. They can cast these spells without components, by a silent act of will alone, and these spells return without study to the individual's memory 24 hours after the last time each was cast. These bonus spells do not count against the number of spells that a Chosen can use per day as dictated by the character's experience level.

Fanatical leanings

Dejected at having his dreams for a long-lasting personal relationship with Mystra smashed so soon after discovering them, Sammaster threw himself into understanding the uses of his Chosen powers and developing theories to explain them. But, as he was to learn later, not all mysteries are meant to be solved by mortal minds. For if such were true, the drive and inventiveness of the mortal races would surely have answered all the questions posed by the world around us and, speaking purely hypothetically of course, the deities themselves might even be displaced. Nevertheless, Sammaster's drive, nay, obsession with learning the whys, wherefores, and the secrets of the mysteries of Mystra's power, both within him and in Toril at large, began to consume Sammaster's days and nights. Further, while he loved Mystra and would serve her well for some time, a



bitter seed of resentment had been planted, a seed that would bear much ill fruit in the years to come.

Sammaster the Mad

With his new status, detailed information regarding the man known as Sammaster was easier to come by, though as is often the case, sources must remain anonymous. The following account comes from one such source; it is revealed here courtesy of a journal kept by a Harper who had been captured by the forces of Zhentil Keep. It speaks of Sammaster encountering— for the first time, I believe—those same forces.

It was the Year of Cornerstones (855 DR), the season was spring, and the time was dawn. Sammaster was wandering through the then-untamed border between Cormyr and the Dalelands when he came upon a Zhent slaving caravan.

The Zhent camp had a perimeter of a dozen horsemen and a score of foot soldiers guarding three large, “cage carts” full of peasants taken from the farmlands in the surrounding area. Nearby roared the fires of the slavers and the rest of the Zhents who were just awakening from a night of drinking, debauchery, and physically abusing “troublesome” slaves. The slavers never knew what hit them.

Upon seeing the camp’s fires, Sammaster approached and determined the nature of these people. Driven to one of his rages at the scene, Sammaster—alone and on foot—charged the nearest cavalryman and pulled him from his horse. Taking the Zhent’s steed, Sammaster called upon his spells and the silver fire within him to destroy the slavers.

Sammaster sent a fireball into the midst of the slavers’ tents, then rode through the carnage blasting the scurrying survivors with *silver fire* as they tried to gather their weapons or flee the scene. A ragged cheer went up from the slaves as Sammaster appeared from out of the billowing smoke and screaming Zhents, a halo of *silver fire* about his head. The remaining guards turned to prevent the wizard from reaching the slaves while a Zhent mage and a few foot soldiers turned and ran toward the helpless peasants.

Sammaster was delayed by having to deal with the guards’ holding action, but he dispatched them just in time to see the atrocity committed by the Zhent mage. While the Chosen of Mystra was occupied in dealing explosive retribution upon each and every slaver that stood against him, the Zhent mage and his bodyguard fell upon one of the cage carts. Apparently they had thought to use the slaves as hostages to buy their lives, but the panicking people in the cage cart flailed about them with their chains, inflicting a minor injury on one of the soldiers. All thought of hostage-taking fled the small group of Zhents in their anger and fear, and they fell to slaughtering the helpless slaves within with weapons and magic.

Sammaster, covered in blood by this time, heard the peasants’ screams. He too screamed in fury as he saw the wholesale slaughter being carried out in front of him. As he came upright in the saddle in the grip of uncontrollable grief and rage, a brilliant ball of *silver fire* erupted from him in all directions, killing even the horse he rode upon. The *silver fire* flew to the cage cart where the Zhents were hewing and chopping.



Sammaster the Mad Mage



The ball of *silver fire* struck the cage cart and exploded with a blinding flash sounding like a dozen thunders—not only killing the Zhents but also any peasants who had managed to survive thus far. Striking the ground as his dead mount fell apart beneath him, Sammaster realized what he had done. His uncontrolled rage had cost those few still-living innocents, those he had meant to save, their lives.

Sammaster's psyche could not deal with such a horrible truth, and something in his mind snapped that day. Now seemingly in some sort of trance, the Chosen of Mystra calmly turned to the remaining Zhents, the true cause of these peoples' deaths, and with a coruscating swath of *silver fire* about his form, a fixated Sammaster gruesomely killed every Zhent in the camp, one at a time.

His *silver fire* protected him as he sought each Zhent, overpowered him, and then grasped his enemy's head in his hands. *Silver fire* flared in Sammaster's eyes as he took each Zhent's head in his hands, placing his thumbs over the man's eyes, and released a fiercely hot blast of *silver fire*. Many of the Zhents died instantly and silently, but those who managed to scream had their tongues burned from their mouths by streams of *silver fire* from Sammaster's eyes. More than one of the Zhents' bodies could not withstand such terrible magical energies and burst open, drenching the ground and Sammaster's already bloody hands and face with yet more gore, while spittle dripped from Sammaster's chin.

Upon seeing the deaths of their fellow slaves and the horrible retribution taken by their "rescuer," the remaining already-skittish prisoners panicked. One of the cage carts was overturned in the tumult, crushing several people under the weight of the cart and their fellows. The situation was only worsened when, still in a trancelike state, Sammaster approached. Sammaster blasted open the locks of the third cage cart and burned an exit through the wooden bars of the overturned one. None of the slaves would leave either cart, however, until their bloody savior retreated from the carts. Sammaster watched them go, then fell to his knees amid the smoke and riven bodies. The scents of burning canvas, wood, horseflesh, and—other—flesh assailed him as if they were poisonous gases. He soon lost consciousness.

The Harper who witnessed these events, though horrified by what he had seen, carried the unconscious Sammaster from the scene and tended to him. When Sammaster awoke, the Harper had left to complete whatever mission he had originally been assigned. He had left Sammaster near a well-stoked campfire and supplied him with water and food. Sammaster could not know, of course, that this man had been a Harper and that the story of this day would reach the ears of the Master Harpers, but even if he had known, it would not have mattered to Sammaster.

Sammaster's abilities at this time are described below.

Sammaster (hm M21 & Chosen of Mystra): AC 2 (17 DEX, *ring of protection* +2, *robe of the archmagi*); MV 12; hp 40; THAC0 14 (14 *staff of the magi*); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (*staff of the magi*) or by spell/weapon; SA *robe of*

archmagi, saving throw penalties to targets, bonus spells, advanced *silver fire* use; SD spell immunities, +3 bonus to all saving throws except spell and +5 bonus to saving throws vs. spell (*ring of protection* +2, *robe of the archmagi*, *staff of the magi*); MR 5% (*robe of the archmagi*); SZ M (5' 10"); AL CN.

S 8, D 17, C 25 (12), I19, W 14, Ch 13.

Special Equipment: *ring of protection* +2, *ring of free action*, *staff of the magi*, *robe of the archmagi* (gray).

Spells: 5/5/5/5/5/4/3/3/2, not including bonus spells.

Notes: *Robe of Archmagi Saving Throw Penalties to Targets:* The robe reduces victims' magic resistance and savings throws by -20% and/or -4 when Sammaster casts *charm monster*, *charm person*, *friends*, *hold monster*, *polymorph other*, or *suggestion*.

Bonus Spells: *shield*, *sense shifting**, *alacrity**, *minor spell turning**, *lower resistance**, *extension III*, *steal enchantment**, *Serten's spell immunity*, *energy drain*.

Spell Immunities: *magic missile*, *forget*, *fireball*, *ice storm*, *magic jar*, *death spell*, *finger of death*, *trap the soul*, *power word*, *kill*.

Advanced Silver Fire Use: After his researches into the nature of *silver fire*, Sammaster possessed such skill with his *silver fire* that he could make use of all the abilities detailed as *spellfire* powers in the Spellfire section of the Magic of the Person chapter in *Volos Guide to All Things Magical*.

*Tome of Magic spells.

The news of these events did reach the ears of Elminster and Storm Silverhand. After much discussion and, apparently, consultation with Mystra herself they took no action, assuring themselves that Sammaster had learned a hard lesson in control. They could have done little else in any case; even the powers of the Chosen of Mystra cannot breathe life into those far dead and cannot recreate a body annihilated by *silver fire*. And other events soon took the attentions of Elminster, Storm, and the Harpers away from Sammaster's deed.

Unfortunately for him, Sammaster could not so easily forget what he had done. Though he blamed the Zhents for all the carnage in later years, it is most likely that this rationalization did not convince even him. This episode was undoubtedly the seminal event that irrevocably turned Sammaster down the path to madness and, eventually, evil. His already chaotic tendencies, his irrational rages, and his obsession with magic and the Lady Mystra, when combined with the memory of the above horrific events, was too much for him. Sammaster could not live with the facts that Mystra did not see him as he did Her and with what he had done with the gifts she had entrusted him with. His sense of failure, despair, and grief burrowed deeply into his mind and soul, beginning the process of slowly twisting them into horrible parodies of themselves.

Down the Dark Path

Little is heard of Sammaster for many years, and his activities in the service of the Lady during this period are un-



known. Most believe that he went into seclusion, redevoting himself to magical research. Some even believe that Sammaster, to whom everything magical had come so easily, sought to somehow restore those innocent lives he had taken. Fragmentary information provides hints that this period of time marks Sammaster's first forays into necromantic magic, trying to find a way to revivify the innocent dead. And these researches awakened his interest in the end result of many such magics—the undead.

Sammaster, as a Chosen, would have had little to fear from most undead creatures, and it appears that he sought them out. Quickly moving on from the base, nonintelligent varieties, Sammaster came to know of and foster relationships with several of the higher forms of undead, including vampires and lichs.

One must wonder what Our Lady of Mysteries thought of one of Her Chosen conducting researches into such matters and consorting with such beings; however, it is difficult even now to fathom the thoughts and ways of a deity. One must keep in mind that the Mystra we know today is not the one from the time being discussed; Mystra then was a much more neutral deity. As has often been recorded, her primary interest was in the use and development of magic; she was less particular about how it was used or by whom. Apparently, as long as Sammaster continued to advance the theories of magic and push forward into its frontiers for all mortals, Mystra turned a blind eye. One must therefore assume that this attitude prevailed with her Chosen as well. (Certainly many acts of several of the other Chosen would be frowned upon by the more morally minded Mystra that Toril is blessed with today.) This could also explain the lack of action on the part of Elminster and the other Chosen who heard of the catastrophe near Cormyr.

Sammaster and Alustriel

As noted above, Sammaster disappeared from the records of Faerûn for some time. The next occasion on which information about him resurfaces is in the Year of the Exploding Orl (861 DR) in the city of Silvermoon, where he met the lady mage Alustriel, Chosen of Mystra, for the first time. Alustriel had been ruling the city since 857 DR using her mother's name, Elué. Not since the Goddess of All Magic appeared to him had Sammaster seen such beauty and grace. Alustriel too saw something in Sammaster that drew her to him; perhaps the fire of genius was still evident in his eyes. In any case, the two spent much time together, with Alustriel's caring nature seeming to calm Sammaster's grief and stabilize his most eccentric extremes. This stability was not to last, however.

As with the study of magic and later the Goddess of Magic herself, Alustriel slowly became an obsession for Sammaster. This obsession was not a healthy, natural passion, but rather an insatiable drive to master Alustriel, a need to make her entirely his, a drive to unravel all her secrets and to make her world revolve around him—as his did her. Perhaps this is not a surprise considering the state of Sammaster's mind and his record for forming obsessive relationships, but Alustriel did not take his attempts at "mastery" well, nor did she appreciate his trying to control

her like she was a set of rules to be manipulated by a clever game player. The kind but independent lady mage rebelled at Sammaster's attempts to bring her under his sway, and she was further disturbed by Sammaster's continued researches into necromancy. A few years after their first meeting, the pair parted company. Bitterness was in Sammaster's heart and regret in Alustriel's.

This failed relationship reignited the angst in Sammaster's spirit, leaving him worse off than before he had met the Lady Alustriel. When he dove back into his studies—likely more experiments in necromancy—to build a wall around his feelings, history again lost track of Sammaster.

Algashon the Manipulator

At an unknown juncture subsequent to his relationship with Alustriel, Sammaster met and was befriended by Algashon Nathaire, a priest of Bane who had formerly been a mage. This Algashon had been an evil mage of indifferent skill when he discovered the malevolent power of the god of tyranny, Bane. Seeing in Bane's worship a quicker path to great might, he converted to the worship of Bane. Over time, he rose to great personal power and prominence in the eyes of his god.

Short, dark, and thin of body, Algashon's devious, evil mind was as sharp as a razor. By the time he met the unstable Sammaster, Algashon the priest of tyranny and strife had surpassed the abilities of Algashon the mage, and this allowed him to pass himself off as a mage whenever the need arose. Further, Algashon had by this time wholeheartedly adopted the Banite tenet that Bane's priests, as servants to the god of tyranny, should seek out tyrants and would-be tyrants and support them. In this way, they could better serve their god by enhancing tyranny and strife across the face of the Realms. Of course, this also allowed them to be the true powers behind the thrones of any weak-willed or weak-minded tyrants that could be found. (Indeed, much of the ideology Algashon espoused has much more recently been embraced and elaborated on by Fzoul Chembryl of the Zhentarim. Fzoul promotes this attitude even more vehemently now since he has adopted the worship of Iyachtu Xvim, the Godson of Bane.) In the unstable Sammaster, Algashon saw the chance to create a formidable tyrant, and Bane must also have smiled upon the chance to rob one of his most powerful enemy's Chosen of his last vestiges of sanity—and perhaps his powers or even his life.

At this time, Algashon could be considered as follows:

Algashon Nathaire (hm M8/P14 of Bane): AC 2; MV 12; hp 49; THAC0 12 (10, *footman's mace* +2); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+3 (*footman's mace* +2) or by spell/weapon; SZ M (5' 5"); AL LE.

S 13, D 13, C 16, I15, W 18, Ch 14.

Special Equipment: *footman's mace* +2, *chain mail* +1, *shield* +1, *necklace of adaptation*.

Mage Spells: 4/3/3/2.

Priest Spells: 8/8/7/6/3/2/1.



Notes: Algashon is a dreadmaster, a specialty priest of Bane defined in *Faiths & Avatars*; see that work for his available priest spheres and his special abilities.

A Poison Tongue and an Unsound Mind

Sammaster was at low ebb when Algashon chanced upon him. Algashon was later to write that he encountered Sammaster in the area of Baldur's Gate. Passing himself off as a mage who had been much inspired by Sammaster's past achievements in metamagic, Algashon ingratiated himself to Sammaster.

It can be surmised that Algashon (perhaps with the aid of Bane to disguise the priest's true nature from the Chosen), once accepted by Sammaster as a friend, slowly and subtly began to play on Sammaster's vulnerabilities, especially his grief and rage about the failures of his recent past. Algashon assuaged Sammaster's guilt by keying into the rationalizations the mage had already created to explain his failures: The accident with the slaves was the Zhents' fault, not Sammaster's. The failed relationship with Alustriel was her fault, not Sammaster's. Indeed, all of Sammaster's troubles seemed to begin with the appearance of Mystra and her granting to Sammaster the powers of a Chosen of Mystra, pointed out Algashon. As time rolled on and the two traveled and grew closer, Algashon harped on this matter more and more—all the problems of Sammaster's life were the fault of that uncaring goddess and her equally inconsiderate servants, her so-called "Chosen."

Sammaster resisted this subtle indoctrination at first, only to be painfully reminded of the events at the slavers' camp (the Zhents' fault, of course), his uneasy relationship with Elminster, his failure to win the love of Mystra (Azuth's fault and Elminster's for pointing it out so hardheartedly), and his failure to win Alustriel (her fault and that of her Goddess). As time went on, Sammaster argued against these superficial, easy excuses less and less, and Algashon's lies wove their way deeper into the unhappy and unstable mage's mind and conscience.

The next step in Algashon's (and Bane's) plan was to somehow acquire the secrets and uses of Sammaster's *silver fire*. As the most potent display of Mystra's power within the Chosen, Bane hoped to wrest the exclusive use of this power away from Mystra for his own vile purposes. Toward this end, Algashon prompted Sammaster to use his ability at every opportunity—the better that the evil priest could study the power. When Sammaster balked at using the abilities granted him by the one who had caused him so much misery, Algashon countered with the argument that the price Sammaster had paid was high indeed and that he should therefore use the *silver fire* at every opportunity—after all, what sense in not using to the best effect something acquired at so dear a fee? In this way, said Algashon, could the terrible price Sammaster had paid be almost worth it.

Just as a slow-acting poison insidiously makes its way through the victim, slowly damaging and finally destroying the body, so did Algashon's poisoned words twist Sammaster's mind. The mage came to rely on and trust his

friend in an increasing number of ways. As the two traveled together, years passed, and Sammaster fell gradually deeper and deeper under the sway of Algashon and his vile master.

Vile Plottings and Viler Acts

After Algashon was convinced that Sammaster was truly under his thumb, he received instructions from Bane to begin the next phase. The priest believed that he understood the nature of Sammaster's *silver fire* and that he could control it himself if only some means could be found to steal the ability away and imbue him with it. Rather than risk their pawn's life (yet) by attempting to strip the *silver fire* from Sammaster outright, Bane and Algashon decided to try and arrange to steal another Chosen's *silver fire*.

Taking note of Sammaster's past, Algashon decided that the best target would be Alustriel. Of course there was risk involved in trying to make Sammaster attack one for whom he had professed such love, but Algashon noted that love can often enough be turned to hate without undue difficulty. Algashon also devised a means—some vile clerical ceremony with much of the empowering energy supplied by Bane—which he thought would enable him to deprive Alustriel of her *silver fire* and other Chosen abilities. These would be conferred upon Algashon himself, at which point, the plan went, he would be able to defeat the unstable Sammaster and add Sammaster's abilities to those of Alustriel, transforming him into an even more powerful being than any of the remaining Chosen.

Algashon dreamed of becoming Bane's chosen instrument on Toril, traveling where his master bade, destroying the despised servants of Mystra, and perhaps even ascending to some form of minor divinity himself. Not only would this grant Bane and his servant an incredible amount of power in Faerûn, but those portions of Mystra's power formerly invested in her Chosen would then be under the control of Bane, thus weakening the goddess for other schemes Bane had in store for his enemy.

The Battle of the Chosen

More years passed as Algashon began directing Sammaster's angst and despair toward Alustriel while he secretly perfected the ceremony that would allow him to steal the powers of a Chosen. In the Year of the Stricken Star (875 DR), Algashon put his plan into action when he and Sammaster tracked Alustriel to the Evermoors where she was camped while en route to Silvermoon after a diplomatic mission to points west.

While approaching the area, Algashon again dredged up all of Sammaster's self-hatred and self-pity, redirecting it toward the lovely lady mage. Algashon pitilessly drove Sammaster into one of his insane rages (already much more common by this time than ever before), only to slink off to watch the confrontation from a safe distance (all the while under Bane's protection—to keep any of Mystra's servants from detecting his presence). So intense, so insane was Sammaster's rage as he approached Alustriel's tent that he trembled, wept, and even bit his own lips, tongue, and the insides of his cheeks.



As another of the Chosen, Alustriel sensed Sammaster's proximity to her, but she never expected an attack from the intense but brilliant man she recalled. As she emerged from her tent in the lee of a steep slope to greet him, Sammaster's rage burst out of him as a flooding river bursts a dam.

Blood flowed freely from Sammaster's mouth as he shouted many of the lies and delusions fed to him over the years by Algashon. He raised his arms and *silver fire* assailed the fair Alustriel. She defended herself as soon as she recovered from the shock of seeing someone she cared about in such a state, but she was sorely wounded by Sammaster's first strike.

As the battle raged, Alustriel tried to break through the rage and hatred to the man she had once known, but Algashon had done his work well. Alustriel's attempts at compassion only fueled Sammaster's maniacal rage, and he again wounded one of the few people who truly did care for him. His madness had given him tremendous power and allowed him to tap into reserves of strength that, when combined with his skills in wizardry and his command of *silver fire*, threatened to overwhelm the injured Alustriel.

With no other recourse before her, Alustriel reluctantly called upon two other of Mystra's Chosen with whom she shares a special bond, Laeral Silverhand and Khelben Arunsun, who transported themselves instantly to her side. She did this with the full and sorrowful knowledge that in doing so she was likely condemning Sammaster to a bloody, violent death. Neither Algashon nor Bane had planned for this contingency, and each from his own vantage point saw

their scheme destroyed before them. Algashon attempted to enter the battle to aid his mad pawn, but Bane forbade it, paralyzing the priest where he hid. Bane's voice thundered in Algashon's head that this too could be turned to his advantage.

Few details survive of the battle between four of Mystra's Chosen, although Algashon was temporarily blinded from simply viewing the awesome energies that were being released. (His vision returned soon after the battle.) From the vague location clues given by Alustriel in some interviews, many of the bare hills that are now the Evermoors may have resulted from the effects of this battle. Perhaps a lack of specific detail is after all for the best, for few words could describe the incredible magical furies that were released that day. Indeed, it may be surmised that at least one of the three Chosen that did battle with Sammaster must have consciously worked to keep the effects and aftereffects of the colossal conflict upon the landscape and the Weave of Toril to a minimum. Considering the Chosen involved, the most likely candidate for that role was Alustriel: She would have wished to preserve as much of her beloved North as possible, and as she was wounded, she would have been less effective an offensive combatant than either Khelben or Laeral.

Sammaster the Fallen

When the ferocious energies ceased their coruscations across the field of battle, Sammaster had fallen. Before any of the three could do more than comfort one another and



Algashon Nathaire raises the dead Sammaster.



tend to Alustriel's wounds, Azuth appeared before them as a flaming blue hand. The hand spoke, praising the Chosen both for their bravery and their restraint, and then turned to the supine form of Sammaster. Invoking the name of Our Lady of Mysteries, the hand gestured over Sammaster, and a silver star fell from the sky to hang above his beaten body. Great goutts of silverfire then flowed out from his wounds like milk from a broken vessel and were absorbed by the star, removing the Goddess's favor from his form. Though nearly dead by this time, Sammaster lifted from the ground, stiffened, and bellowed forth a single, horrible, soul-rending scream. The star then shot up into the heavens, spilling silvery sparks like tears behind it, and vanished from sight. Sammaster lay still, his back and limbs twisted at unnatural angles.

Azuth declared that Sammaster's body was to remain where it had fallen as a final lesson and punishment from the goddess. With nothing else left for them to do, the three Chosen traveled to Silverymoon to contemplate the deeds of the day. There Alustriel mourned the loss, though it had been necessary, of an old friend to her, now for the second time.

But Sammaster did not pass onto the planes that day on the blasted heath. After the others left, Algashon emerged from his hiding place and, prompted by his dark god, cast one of the spells that he had prepared to use on Alustriel on Sammaster instead. Not only did this spell restore life to his body, it also trapped some lingering aftereffects of Mystra's power with him. While the *silver fire* and all other discernible Chosen powers were stripped from him, Sammaster was to later discover that the effective immortality granted to all of Mystra's special servants dwelt within him still. While he could be destroyed, Sammaster continued to remain ageless and to heal from wounds very quickly.

Algashon's spell also had another effect on Sammaster. It obliterated any last vestige of sanity and morality that may have remained in his clouded mind and tortured spirit. (Indeed, the lady Alustriel maintains that some part of Sammaster stopped him from killing her before the other Chosen arrived. She also speculates that, in the end, Sammaster may have returned to himself, and seeing all he had done, let himself be struck down.) Neither Bane nor Algashon controlled Sammaster now; Sammaster no longer needed to be directed to any insanity, any evil.

Algashon, taking his still shaken pawn from the field, fed Sammaster more lies. Algashon painted Sammaster a portrait of himself as the tragic hero: Sammaster had driven off the other Chosen after withstanding their furious attacks and only the treachery of the gods Azuth and Mystra had brought him low. Indeed, as Sammaster's wounds healed virtually before their eyes, Algashon whispered that the powers of Faerûn must have feared him terribly to betray him so. Only another deity in the birthing could have inspired two gods to such fear—and Sammaster must be that nascent god.

Mad Prophecies

In the wake of this pivotal event, Sammaster and Algashon disappeared again. What happened during this period of

obscurity we cannot know, but Sammaster was now in the full grip of his own madness and the delusions fostered by Algashon. The next traceable crumb on Sammaster's trail comes to light in the Year of Fell Pearls (887 DR) when Sammaster publishes the first of his retranslations of many of the world's prophetic tomes, including the seer and oracle Maglas' *Chronicle of Years to Come*. It is from a passage in this tome, or more specifically Sammaster's mistaken translation of that passage, that the Cult of the Dragon later rises. Provided below is the key passage that lit a fire in Sammaster demented mind:

“And naught will be left save shattered thrones,
with no rulers but the dead. Dragons shall rule the
world entire, and . . .”

Sammaster the Fallen translated the passage so:

“And naught will be left save shattered thrones
with no rulers. But the dead dragons shall rule the
world entire, and . . .”

Whether this was an honest mistake on the part of Sammaster or just another example of Algashon's “suggestions” is unknown, and ultimately, is moot. For the evil fire that this passage set alight in Sammaster's brain was destined to burn for centuries—even to this very day. With the priest's help, Sammaster once again set to wandering the face of Faerûn, but this time it was to preach the future of the world as he saw it would—and should—be. Whenever he was not so preaching (and already beginning to gather followers), Sammaster turned again to his necromantic researches, this time not hoping to return the dead to life but to grant a form of undeath to dragons. His researches were, according to current Cult of the Dragon tradition, aided in part by ancient tomes he had unearthed from beneath either the sands of Anauroch, or, some say, the great desert Raurin, after he saw their location in a vision.

Sammaster's First Dracolich and the Founding of the Cult

Eventually, Sammaster, Algashon, and their band of followers settled the city-state of Chondathan and set up a headquarters of sorts for themselves. (Chondathan was renamed Saerloon some years after the founding of Sembia in 913 DR). They continued to preach and attract followers, and these converts, needing a title to refer to their leader, coined the honorific “First-Speaker” to honor the founder of their cult. It was while Sammaster was in Chondathan that he unveiled the *rings of dragons* for the first time (see the Magic and Monsters of the Cult chapter). And the members of the cult, under Sammaster's leadership, began the experiments that would reach fruition in the Year of the Queen's Tears (902 DR), when Sammaster convinced the great red wyrm Shargrailar, whose lair was in the mountains near the headwaters of the Immerflow in the Thunder Peaks, to undergo the conversion process into a dracolich (detailed in the dracolich MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® entry found in the Magic and Monsters of the Cult chapter).



Shargrailar may not have been the first dragon to imbibe the vile concoction Sammaster created to set the process in motion, but he was the first to survive it. (Shargrailar went on to become the most powerful dracolich ever seen on the face of Faerûn.) With the successful creation of a dracolich, or as Sammaster at first called his creation, a night dragon, the nascent cult in Chondathan exploded in popularity and in wealth. With an overwhelmingly effective weapon to enforce his will, Sammaster soon acquired huge fortunes by using the threat of Shargrailar to extort moneys throughout the former city-state colonies of Chondath that would become Sembia. His fearful shadow swept over caravans, marketplaces, and merchants. Even the rich nobles paid tribute when the Cult threatened to send Shargrailar to burn their farmlands and villas to ash. (Sammaster did not think to oppress the peasants for their coppers, as it seems they were as far beneath his notice as they were to many of the nobles themselves.)

It would take until the Year of the Plough (906 DR) for the use of the appellation “Cult of the Dragon” to describe Sammaster’s cult to finally become popular. The name likely originated among the local peasantry who all too often were witness to the group’s crimes and its most potent weapon, Shargrailar. While some scholars point out that “Cult of the Dracolich” or “Cult of the Dracoliches” would have been far more appropriate titles for this group, they forget that so soon after the conversion process Shargrailar still appeared to be a normal, living dragon. And as members of Sammaster’s cult picked up the usage of the name to refer to themselves (knowing as they did of the less-public activities of cult members involved in courting new dragons for the conversion process and discovering dragon lore to be used to manipulate dragons in the future), the name of Sammaster’s cult became fixed.

The Cult Grows

The Cult in Chondathan soon grew too large for even Sammaster and Algashon to manage, and offshoot cells began to establish themselves in the city-states of Chancelgaunt (later renamed Selgaunt) and Yhaunn. Sammaster was even able to persuade another wyrm, Rauglothgor, who later laired in the ruins of the Tranquil Tower near Lake Sember, to undergo the preliminary preparations for dracolichdom, and the Cult began preparing him a host to contain his spirit during his eventual “transcendence.” Algashon was thrilled by the progress of events since that day in the Evermoors. Sammaster’s madness had not affected his drive and ambition, and the mage now willingly, with no coercion, did most of the evil work the priest of Bane had considered it his goal to manipulate Sammaster into doing. Algashon was determined to expand the Cult beyond a few hundred members in one wealthy but otherwise unimportant city-state and a mere score in two others. Besides, thought the priest, operating such a large organization so openly, so brazenly, would soon attract attention from other power groups.

He therefore mentioned to Sammaster that the mage should create a collection of all his wisdom, prophecies, formulae, and procedures concerning the creation of night

dragons. Algashon could then have the book reproduced and distributed to many of the members of the Cult who had come from distant towns and lands. These members could be dispersed back to their homelands, taking a copy of this tome with them and spreading Sammaster’s word and his cult far and wide. The idea of his life’s work forming the written ideology and secret knowledge of the organization played to Sammaster’s vanity and growing megalomania as something right and proper, and he created the *Tome of the Dragon* (detailed in the Magic and Monsters of the Cult chapter) over the course of three years. Cult scribes then set immediately to copying the information. Algashon’s masterstroke of evil inspiration resulted in the creation of this magical tome and the distribution of many lesser tomes that spread Sammaster’s ideology and his cult throughout the Heartlands, the North, and beyond.

Algashon was also correct about the Cult attracting the attention of other power groups in the Realms. The Harpers soon mobilized to infiltrate, disable, and destroy the Cult cell in Chondathan before Sammaster’s evil could thoroughly infest the newly formed country of Sembia. (Sembia was formed in 913 DR under the banner of Rauthauvyr the Raven, commander of the new nation’s military for the Overmaster, the elected merchant ruler of the nation.) While they had some successes, they failed to destroy Shargrailar and could not prevent the spread of the Cult’s ideology across the face of Faerûn.

The forces of Zhentil Keep also allied themselves against the Cult after Sammaster demanded extortionate “safe passage” fees from their caravans (both trade and slave). Of course the Zhents refused to pay, and Shargrailar was sent out from his lair in the Thunder Peaks to raid several Zhent outposts along the River Tesh and southward and to destroy any Zhent caravans he encountered in the region between Shadow Gap and the River Tesh. The Zhents were not cowed by this display of power, though; instead they became one of the Cult’s most dangerous foes—which they remain to this very day.

The flush of wealth and success that the Cult felt soon faded as powerful adversaries continued to array themselves against the actions of the followers of Sammaster. But this did not deter the mad mage. He pressed on, creating several more night dragons in the following years, at least some of which were forced into the conversion process by Cult strike forces and the threat of death at the claws and fangs of Shargrailar should they turn down the Cult’s offer of immortality. Rather than develop contingency plots for dealing with the Cult’s newly acquired enemies of stature, Sammaster ignored them or simply dispatched a night dragon to deal with any foes that were discovered. Not merely mad now, Sammaster was becoming drunk with a level of power he had not felt since before he had been stripped of his powers as one of the Chosen.

Algashon tried to dissuade his mad partner from some of his more blatant schemes, counseling caution and a lighter, defter hand in running the Cult’s affairs. He often proposed that the Cult go underground, making it a less-obvious target for its accumulating foes. Sammaster



refused, blinded by his visions of power and revenge against the world that had wronged him. Seeing that he was rapidly losing his controlling grip on the mad mage, Algashon began to plan.

Sammaster's abilities at this time are described below.

Sammaster (hm Nec26): AC 5 (17 DEX, *staff of power*) MV 12; hp 45; THAC0 12 (10, *staff of power*); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2 or 2d6+2 if a charge is expended (*staff of power*) or by spell/weapon; SA differing necromancer powers, necrology and netherworld knowledge, command undead: SD *detect magic*, *wizard sight* (*Tome of Magic*), *detect invisibility* at will, 90-foot infravision, spell immunities, +2 bonus to all saving throws (*staff of power*); SZ M (5' 10"); AL CE.

S 8, D 17, C 25, I20, W 14, Ch 13.

Special Equipment: *staff of power*, *ring of human influence*, *ring of wizardry*, *potion of evil dragon control* (×3), *pearl of power* (recalls one 8th-level spell), *wings of flying*.

Spells:* 13/13/13/7/7/6/6/6/6.

*Including one bonus necromantic spell per spell level and effects of *ring of wizardry* (doubles 1st-3rd-level spells).

Notes: At this point, Sammaster's extensive researches into necromancy and undeath qualify him as a necromancer specialist mage. His unique history and studies also give him the following special abilities:

Differing Necromancer Powers: Sammaster does not suffer the usual necromancer penalties that balance the bonuses a necromancer receives, as in actuality he is a mage that has gained incredible knowledge of necromancy, performed twisted ceremonies, and made dark pacts to gain his unusual abilities. Therefore, he does not need a 16 Wisdom score, is not restricted from learning illusion/phantasm and enchantment/charm spells, does not suffer a -15% penalty when learning spells from other schools, etc. He does enjoy all the bonuses of the necromancer specialty (as a way to define some of his increased abilities in AD&D® game terms).

Necrology and Netherworld Knowledge: Sammaster possesses, among his numerous nonweapon proficiencies, extensive knowledge of the undead, the disposition of spirits after death, and the outer planes. These nonweapon proficiencies are detailed in *The Complete Book of Necromancers*, but effectively, unless something is considered obscure knowledge in these fields, he knows it.

Command Undead: Sammaster can command undead creatures as an evil priest of his level.

Spell Immunities: Sammaster is immune to any spell that drains life energy, traps or moves the spirit to other places unwillingly, or instantly kills outright in a fashion not due to accumulated damage, such as: *energy drain*, *magic jar*, *death spell*, *finger of death*, *trap the soul*, *power word, kill*, etc.

The Harpers Attack

Those plans bore fruit in the Year of the Sinhala (916 DR) when Algashon's spies relayed to him that the Harpers were closely tracking the whereabouts of the Cult's leader, seeking to eliminate Sammaster at an opportune time when the struggle would not place too many innocents in danger and, in removing him, to remove the heart of the Cult and thus send its body of membership to a swift end. Algashon kept this information from Sammaster and made plans, with a select group of followers, to be far from Sammaster's side when he believed Those Who Harp would act.

Sammaster and his entourage—which was quite a large group of over 60 Cult members accompanied by dragon hybrids and dragon-kin, undead creatures, and even summoned and enslaved other-planar creatures (it is whispered)—were to pay a first visit to a tall hill near the southern edge of Cormanthor where two green wyrms of power, who controlled a whole roost of wyverns that plagued the range of hills descending from north of what is now Featherdale to the Dun Hills, were being courted to become dracoliches. Unable to directly teleport to the wyrms' lair, the common practice among Cult mages once contact had been established with a dracolich candidate, Sammaster traveled in state up the roads connecting Chondathan to Chancelgaunt, straight up through Moondale (now the sight of Ordulin), and into the southern edge of Cormanthor (considerably more south of its current location). The overflying dracohybrids were unable to discern exactly what lay below the tree canopy at this point, but Sammaster pressed on into the underlying hills with no fears, for the green wyrms had promised to hold off any wyvern attacks upon the entourage, and after all, was not he alone—let alone himself and his entourage—mighty enough to deal with any random forest creatures or elf scouting parties that might intrude themselves between him and his goal?

The Harper ambush came at dawn one spring morning; a massed force of Harpers and their allies had, with the blessings of the elves and the nature deities, hidden themselves virtually undetectably in the forest just outside of the tiny village of Hap. While Sammaster was surprised, he responded quickly and heavy-handedly, summoning two lesser dracoliches to aid him in obliterating this impudent threat and loosing his entourage to kill anything in sight not one of their own. (Algashon had arranged for Sammaster to send Shargrailar off on some unknown long-range mission, removing the night dragon both from the danger posed by the Harpers and preventing the powerful dracolich from tipping the scales of power in the battle too far in favor of Sammaster.)

The battle between the Cult and the Harpers raged for a full day and night, with heavy losses on both sides. Harper mages and priests of Lathander and other good deities had come prepared to deal with the dracoliches as best they could. Warriors, rangers, and paladins clashed with the Cult's merchant-warriors and mercenaries. Those who broke through the Cult warriors were pounced on by flights of dragon-kin and peculiar dracohybrids. None could reach Sammaster, and as the sun set, the fallen Chosen of Mystra



rode into battle atop a formidable dracolich commanding a virtual army of creatures both undead and the results of other foul magical experiments, many of which even the Harpers had never seen before (see the Magic and Monsters of the Cult chapter for some of these creatures). Despite the element of surprise the Harpers had seized, it appeared that the Cult, led by Sammaster's might, was to overwhelmingly win the engagement as the sun rose over the battlefield for the second time. Several priests of Lathander, desperate for some means to stop what seemed to be an even-more-powerful Sammaster than any reports had described, appealed to the Morninglord for aid in stopping the seemingly invincible mad mage.

The Death of Sammaster

Lathander heard their dawn prayers. Outraged at the future Sammaster prophesied and the abominations of creation he had perpetrated unceasingly, Lathander sent a battle avatar to the field. The undead creatures forming a wall around Sammaster disintegrated in a flash of light as the full glory of the god of the dawn touched them, but the choking ash of their remains clogged the air immediately as an unearthly wind howled forth from Sammaster, forming the ash into a cloud that obscured the sky and turned the dawn light red as blood. Sammaster's dracolich steed breathed a massive gout of dragonfire upon the golden breastplate of the Morninglord, only to scream an unearthly keening wail that faded into nothing as *Dawnspeaker*, Lathander's mace, smote its head and disrupted its unliving existence.

Sammaster, seemingly untroubled, floated in midair where his steed had been, and in the twinkling of an eye a coruscating aura of ineffable blackness surrounded him, as if a cloak of night and death had been knit about his body. His eyes glowed dark purple, and he gestured with his staff, and a mighty turning wheel of faintly glowing energy appeared between him and Lathander. Energy—the auras streaming out from every living and undead being on the battlefield except Lathander and Sammaster—appeared as multicolored threads, and all of them were being sucked into the wheel, spun around, and pulled tight. Within an instant, all were taut.

Those who were there speak in what accounts remain of a sharp pain followed by a sense of anticipation, as if some huge—thing—waited just beyond the doorways of their senses to happen. What happened next is recalled by very few, and only in dreamlike snatches, as past this point apparently only Sammaster and Lathander could move.

Lathander looked upon Sammaster and a fierce delight seemed to play behind his eyes. "Abomination," he cried, "die!" Crackling streams of lightning and golden radiance poured out from his eyes, assaulting Sammaster with deadly force. Sammaster's skeleton was visible briefly, glowing like an inner light within his corporeal form, and he convulsed suddenly in midair, dropping his staff as his fingers curled into claws. Then, with a tremendous effort, he reached up and sideways with his left hand to *elsewhere* and drew back a single thin sheet of metal glinting with a faint, silvery sheen. Strange symbols and glyphs crawled across its surface.

Sammaster held it up before him, as if to force Lathander to read it. "Fool!" Lathander thundered, and *Dawnspeaker* came down resoundingly through the metallic scroll and into Sammaster, whose body twisted in the after-shock of the blow and then, miraculously, started to straighten. The scroll shattered in all directions into a million slivers of light, but one small, dagger-shaped piece stuck in the golden plate armor above Lathander's heart, scratching his chest, and four drops of his blood fell to the ground at his feet. (After the battle these were gathered up in an amber flask by a priest of the Morninglord from the village of Hap. Today this holy relic of the Morninglord's church is revered as the artifact, the *Blood of Lathander*.)

Lathander reached out with one hand and crushed the wheel of spellstuff that held all in thrall while twin globes of dull red and black flew from Sammaster's hands to burst against Lathander's breastplate ineffectually. Lathander gestured, and a hole of light was ripped through the flying ash that obscured the sun. Light brighter than any who witnessed the event ever saw before or later in their lives shot down through the hole, cloaking Sammaster from view. Sammaster did not have time to even scream as he was instantly killed—apparently incinerated in the sun's fire. Upon investigation of the battlefield later, nothing remained of him but about two pounds of fine ash.

With Sammaster and most of his entourage (containing the majority of his most loyal followers) dead after the battle with the Harpers and Lathander's avatar, Algashon relocated his personal sect of followers to Urmlaspyr and then beyond, taking the organization underground as he had long advised Sammaster to do. Over the intervening centuries, the sect of the Cult loyal to Algashon and those cells loyal to the Cult's founder that earlier had been instructed to branch out across Faerûn came into conflict many times. In all likelihood, this early schism of the Cult resulted in the fractious nature of the organization to this day.

To Sleep, Perchance to Dream

As the world would learn over 300 years later, Algashon had not been the only high-ranking member of the Cult to plan ahead. So long devoted to necromancy, Sammaster had made plans—and cast *contingency* and *chain contingency* spells—to prepare him for unlife as a lich should his amazing regenerative abilities fail him.

When the avatar of Lathander blasted Sammaster's body apart, the mad mage's mind fled to a prepared phylactery, in this case a small but exquisite uncut diamond worth over 10,000 gp. This phylactery was unknowingly carried by Zotulla, a half-elven mage/thief. It served as a portion of the start-up funds for a new Cult cell that Sammaster had given to Zotulla, along with what is believed to be the original *Tome of the Dragon*. Secreted in this book were a set of secret instructions for Zotulla that would allow Sammaster to transfer his phylactery-held spirit into another body—much in the manner of a dracolich whose original body is destroyed. Also fastened inside the front cover of the book was a small packet that, when opened, appeared to contain a quantity of fine ash. This is believed



Sammaster the Lich

to be the mortal remains of Sammaster that his new “host” would need to consume in order for the mad mage’s psyche to inhabit it. The means by which this quantity of ash could have been put in the packet before his death by as skilled a necromancer as Sammaster can be guessed at, but should not be dwelt upon by the squeamish.

Zotulla also had been given instructions by Sammaster to found a new cell of the Cult farther northwest, nearer to the border of Cormyr and the lair of Shargrailar. Unfortunately, Zotulla did not succeed. A little less than two years after he founded a cell in the Desertsouth Mountains above the town of Tilverton, the Zhents were able to locate his cell’s sanctuary and attack. They wiped out the cell with the sole exception of Zotulla himself. Able to escape thanks to his magic, the half-elf fled higher into the mountains, only to meet his final fate at the hands and blades of an orc war party. Not knowing who they had just killed and what they possessed, they tossed the diamond (which in its uncut state did not reveal its true worth to those without knowledge of gems) in among their other loot and tried to destroy the *Tome of the Dragon*. They doubtlessly failed.

Both the phylactery and the mystical book disappear from history for over 300 years as they were likely passed on or traded from shaman to shaman and from chieftain to chieftain of half-a-dozen humanoid races and three times that number of tribes. But some unknown event—perhaps a humanoid shaman with wits enough to decipher Sammaster’s instructions—finally granted Sammaster a chance at unlife as a lich.

Awake to Unlife

Sammaster’s story picks up again early in the Year of Many Mists (1282 DR), when a lich arose high in the Desertsouth Mountains near Shadow Gap. This lich, who called itself Sammaster, began to gather servants, creatures, and even a few dragons under its banner. Rumors spoke of the lich as the once-dead founder of the Cult of the Dragon. The same rumor said that Sammaster the lich was using a dracolich of enormous size and power as its steed. Cultists (and others) in the area investigated and found that the lich’s claim was true: He was Sammaster. The Cult began to rally around the lich lord. Alarmed Harpers and good folk of the Dalelands and Cormyr began to ready themselves to defend their homes and persons from the lich and his hordes of evil servants.

In the Year of the Blacksnake (1285 DR), a group of adventuring paladins known as the Company of Twelve rode off to confront Sammaster and his growing army. The paladins, supported by the Harpers, attacked the lich and his dracolich in the ruins of an ancient city then known as Harrowsmouth, or the “Gates of Hell.” The battle was immense and nine of the Company of the Twelve died, but in the end Sammaster was defeated and the mad mage fell once more. Though they searched far and wide, neither Sammaster’s phylactery nor the *Tome of the Dragon* was recovered by the forces of good.



Final Disposition

In the century since then, this ruined city has been lost to the ever-expanding sands of Anauroch, and adventurers have not been able to find Sammaster's final resting place. Current leaders of the Sembian-based cell of the Cult (now once again located in Saerloon since before 1350 DR, but this time covertly) have been overheard to say that Sammaster is dust in some forgotten tomb or lost city (perhaps this apocryphal "Gates of Hell"). A consensus of opinion among sages and diviners is that this remark can be believed, though exactly what it means remains unclear.

No creature, alive or dead, has offered a credible claim of being Sammaster brought again to life since the battle in 1285 DR. This might lead one to conclude that the mad mage is truly and finally gone. While such a thought is doubtless comforting, comfort should not be confused with the truth. Sammaster existed inside his phylactery for 300 years before he reappeared the first time. And, the diamond was not recovered after the battle in the Desertmouth peaks. Some scholars also have speculated on the exact meaning of the overheard "dust" comment by the Sembian Cult of the Dragon leaders.

Therefore, as to the current disposition of Sammaster First-Speaker, I offer the following theories:

- Sammaster is dead, his spirit passed onto the planes forever, likely to the City of Strife in Oinos on the Gray Waste, or possibly to some other plane, such as Avalas, in Acheron, where the former abode of Bane was located.
- The mad mage's psyche again rests within the lost diamond phylactery, awaiting another chance to return to the Realms as a vastly powerful lich.
- Sammaster being "dust in a long-forgotten tomb" from the Cultists' statements mentioned above may indicate his form has evolved to that of a demilich. If this is so, woe to any who find the resting place of Sammaster's form. He is likely to possess capabilities far in excess of even other demiliches.
- One final theory is that it would not be beyond Sammaster's capabilities to try to bring himself back in the body not of a humanoid lich but rather as a dracolich. While one trembles at such a possibility, the prospect cannot be discounted out of hand.

Chronicles of the Cult

In the years following Sammaster's "death" battling the avatar of Lathander, the Cult of the Dragon all but vanished from the face of history. Algashon now led the remnants of the Sembian cell and most of the other cells were still in the process of forming and too busy concentrating their power bases to attempt any feats worthy of note here.

Algashon led the Cult through the millennium, using age-retarding magics to maintain his youth. He adopted robes of a rich, deep purple to signify his status in the Cult, and soon being allowed to wear this particular shade of purple signified a high rank within the Cult, and members of the inner circle of leadership came to be known as "Wearers of the Purple." The Sembian Cult's ruling coal-

tion has been known by that title ever since, marked by the dark purple robes they all don for formal occasions.

As Algashon ruled over the decades, he slowly brought more and more of Bane's doctrines and philosophies into the Sembian branch of the Cult. While many of the followers he had brought west with him from Chondathan had no compunctions about this, many of those who joined the Cult later grew unsettled as Algashon steered the Cult farther and farther toward a seeming union with the church of Bane.

Reformationists vs. Pragmatists

Many people who had joined the Cult, especially those who already had wealth and some status, had joined because they saw the Cult as a means to further their own power through mutual alliances with dragons and dracoliches, rather than as any sort of religious experience. This coalition of warrior-merchants, mages, and rogues believed that the Cult should be more of a secret society and less a religious organization, and it was led by the archmage Tuelhalva Drakewings.

Over the years until 1000 DR, these philosophical differences grew until the entire membership of the Cult of the Dragon in Sembia had aligned behind one of two leaders and their philosophies: Algashon and his Bane-influenced reformational stance ("We shall rule as servants of the undying dragons and the ultimate tyrant, Bane") or Drakewings's pragmatic perspective ("Anything we can do to further our worldly power base by exploiting our knowledge of dragons and the creation of dracoliches serves us well both now and in the future when undead dragons rule.") Those loyal to Drakewings were eventually forced to move in secret within the Cult, as Algashon brought in yet more priests of Bane to bolster his support within the group and intimidate all those who might oppose him into at least giving lip service to the primacy of his leadership.

The hostilities continued to grow, with occasional skirmishes spilling the blood of both sects within the Cult. The violence further factionalized the Cult, and it was only a matter of time until a final confrontation took place within the Sembian Cult.

The Whispering of Gargauth

In the Year of the Awakening (1001 DR), Tuelhalva Drakewings, Keeper of the Secret Hoard and Member of the Purple, was sent south to Peleveran to investigate reports of an ancient undead dragon that lurked in the catacombs of the capital city of Peleveran, Peleveria. (Peleveran was located in the triangle formed between present-day Torsch and Hardcastle and the Great Rift. Its capital, Peleveria, was built into the side of the Landrise.) While Tuelhalva found no sign of an undying wyrm, he did discover a gathering evil in the deepest caverns. From the depths of an endless pit, a reptilian voice whispered promises of absolute power if only the ancient wards that prevented his entry into the world were sundered. Tuelhalva saw this as his opportunity to break with the Sembian Cult and set up his own power base elsewhere.



The Rage of Dragons

In the Year of the Dracorage (1018 DR), most of Faerûn suffered from various draconic rampages. While Cult historians have attempted to claim responsibility for all of that year's draconic attacks, such a proposition is clearly ludicrous. If the Cult truly possessed such extensive control of evil dragonkind across the face of the Realms, they would surely have conquered all of Toril long ago. However, one event of that year—the obliteration of Peleveran in a “rage of dragons”—was brought on by the Cult; in fact, it proved to be the swan song of both Tuelhalva and Algashon.

Both factions of the Sembian Cult had gathered much magic, multiple dracoliches, and live dragons to back up their philosophy. For 17 years Tuelhalva labored with ancient magics until finally he could cast the mighty incantations that the voice revealed to him. With the casting of his last spell, a great fiend—the demipower Gargauth—arose from the pit. Drakewings felt that his time had come, and he used his newfound fiendish support to guarantee a place of power for himself and his faction. Seizing this opportunity, those members of the pragmatist faction most loyal to Tuelhalva declared their secession from the Cult in Sembia, teleported or used other swift magical means of travel, and joined Tuelhalva in Peleveran, along with their dracolich, dracohybrid, and dragon allies. In exchange for his release, the diabolical lord summoned forth an army of fiends to serve the archmage's whim. Tuelhalva, the horde

of hellspawn, and select draconian allies (mainly the less obvious dragon-kin and a few dracohybrids) marched forth. The throne of Peleveran was his within a fortnight, and his friends became its new nobility.

As Peleveran fell to the armies of baatezu, Gargauth, the great fiend of the pit, disguised himself in a more pleasing form as an aged wizard and flew north. When he reached Urmlaspyr, he sought out the leaders of the Cult there, and his whispering voice told them of Tuelhalva's victory and how the archmage had destroyed an ancient undead dragon king he had found to obtain it. Enraged, Algashon and 20 other mages of the Cult summoned all their dragon, dracolich, and dragon hybrid allies together into huge a flight of dragons. Within a month of Tuelhalva's coronation, a Rage of Dragons descended on Peleveran, and when it had passed not a trace of that nation nor Tuelhalva remained.

Drakewings, his followers, and the handful of dragons and dracoliches they controlled were all destroyed, but the Sembian faction's victory came at a price. Beyond decimating the Sembians' ranks of draconic might, Algashon, high priest of Bane, fell in the climactic confrontation with Drakewings. Algashon and Tuelhalva had met high above the smoking ruins of Peleveria, each atop a mighty dracolich. The name of Drakewings' mount is lost, but Algashon rode Shargrailar the Dark into the fray. Of the four, only the Sacred One, as Shargrailar demanded to be called, survived.

After destroying Drakewings' faction, the remaining Sembians returned home, but with Algashon and many reformationalist members of the Purple gone, the Cult needed new leaders. While the remaining Banites tried to maintain control once back in Sembia, they were finally outmaneuvered and outvoted by the larger numbers of the pragmatist faction, and the more pragmatic philosophy has had the upper hand in the Sembian Cult of the Dragon to this day. The Sembian Cult entered another quiescent period after this, either working so covertly as to not direct any attention toward themselves or simply quietly recouping the losses the Cult had suffered.

Branch Cell Activities

Other Cult cells came to prominence through their activities in the century of Sammaster's return to Faerûn as a lich. In the Year of the Winged Worm (1225 DR), a Cult cell was formed near the city of Elversult. The Cult began by infiltrating the dock workers in the port town of Pros. From this they “earned” (most likely extorted and stole) enough wealth to approach a great black dragon named Cypress who laired in the swamps nearby. While Cypress would not become a dracolich for several decades, his rare psionic abilities allowed him to quickly and easily control the human leaders of the Cult, finally killing them when they were of no more use to him. (For the final fate of Cypress, see *The Veiled Dragon* novel.)

In the Year of the Snarling Dragon (1279 DR), just three years before Sammaster's “rebirth,” a Cult cell in Luskan that had three white dragons and a lone dracolich ally self-destructed when one of the white dragons and the draco-



lich attacked the other two dragons, a mated pair, for their hoards. Before long the Cult members were drawn into the fray. By the time the battle ended, none of the four dragons still moved and the few surviving Cult members raided the most valuable items from all the dragons' hoards and fled the area forever.

The Battle of the River Rising

It is not until some 60 years later that the Sembian cell of the Cult of the Dragon is again heard from. In the Year of the Lion (1340 DR), Cult forces and a portion of the Sembian army engaged in a magical and martial battle in Featherdale. It is believed that the Cult had established a trading coterie and a base of power outside of Featherdale. When the Cult attempted to infiltrate and control Featherdale itself, Featherdale asked for and received help from the Sembian border patrol that was in the area.

The Sembian forces met those of the Cult in a battle that has become known as the Battle of the River Rising. The Sembian and Featherdarran forces eventually managed to defeat the Cult members and their allies, but the mysterious Dalelands archmage Mhzentul (crafter of the Seven Lost Rings of Mhzentul detailed in *Volo's Guide to All Things Magical*) fell in that battle. Mhzentul sacrificed his life to become a living pillar of flame, then swept through the Cult's forces, causing the mercenaries and mages of the Cult to flee from the archmage's wrath. The Cult's warriors then broke and fled before the smaller but better disciplined Sembian military force. Unfortunately, the mighty magic had taken its toll, and Mhzentul is assumed to have perished in the conflagration he created.

A Flight of Dragons

In the Year of the Worm (1356 DR), the most recent flight of dragons took place. This flight started in the lands beyond Thar and ended after the dragons had inflicted great damage in the civilized lands of the Realms. In the course of this flight, the following damage was inflicted:

- The cities of Yúlash and Phlan were both completely destroyed. (Yúlash was later rebuilt by Zhentil Keep.)
- Over 9,000 warriors perished at the Citadel of the Raven while killing two of the three dragons that attacked.
- Zhentil Keep was heavily damaged by two great beasts that raged through the Keep's streets like great cats and that seemed to shrug off Zhent wizard attacks like water before they were finally slain.
- The largest wyrm of all attacked the town of Hillsfar and was slain by the city's mages. The dragon's vast body fell into the harbor and lay there half-submerged like some grotesque island until the city's mages blasted and burned the body away.
- A large dragon was slain over Arabel by catapults and archers. It crashed onto the road east of the city's gates, thereby saving the lives of many of the town's citizens.
- The War Wizards of Suzail, led by Vangerdahast, drove off a great green dragon by means of their Art. The dragon fled south over the Dragonmere and was not seen again.

- Syluné, the Witch of Shadowdale and Chosen of Mystra, died after breaking a *staff of the magi* over the nose of an ancient red wyrm that ravaged Shadowdale and set parts of the forest of Cormanthor ablaze.

These attacks, as well as the mass movement of so many dragons at one time, have been laid at the feet of the Cult of the Dragon. The Cult has done nothing to refute these claims, and a few of its more vocal members have even bragged of it, but it is unclear whether the Cult of the Dragon really did create the flight of dragons and whether it could or would duplicate it again.

The phenomena of flights of dragons and the rarer Rage of Dragons (a flight of dragons of tremendous size—perhaps involving all of dragonkind—speculated to occur approximately every 300 years) remains one of the greatest unsolved mysteries of modern-day Toril, although logic dictates that it will be satisfactorily explained one day. Some sages say that such flights are merely part of dragons' life-cycles. If so, many knowledgeable folk have countered, they ought then to be much more common than they are. Another proposal that flights of dragons are somehow linked to the movement of the stars in the heavens above is only slightly less ridiculous. However, it is possible that the Cult of the Dragon has learned to magically harness certain aggressions and biological imperatives of the species, perhaps by accentuating the need to acquire and hold territory and treasure so as to rise in status and attract a mate. If the biological cycles of many dragons are brought into synchronization so that a score or more of them feel such increased drives simultaneously, an effect similar to the flight of dragons might be generated.

Recent Activities

Lately, the Cult of the Dragon has begun to act openly and often in the lands around the Sea of Fallen Stars. An indication of the power of the Cult was demonstrated in the Year of the Prince (1357 DR) when the Cult became embroiled in events surrounding the spellfire wielder, Shandril Shessair. The young thief was captured by a Cult mage calling herself the Shadowsil after Shandril's adventuring company was all but wiped out in a battle with Cult members.

The Shadowsil presented Shandril to the dracolich Rauglothgor as an offering, but asked that the Cult be allowed to question the girl before the dracolich consumed her. Rauglothgor agreed, but before any information could be extracted from Shandril, chaos erupted within Rauglothgor's lair as the Knights of Myth Drannor and Shandril's future husband, Narm, attacked. Shandril struck the Shadowsil with a *crystal ball-like* object, hurting the Cult mage and damaging the item. As it turns out, the item had been a prison for a magic-consuming creature known as a balhiir (see the *Villains' Lorebook*) which upset the spells and magical abilities of Rauglothgor, the Shadowsil, the spellcasters of the Knights and Narm.

Instructed by Elminster that only she could defeat the balhiir, Shandril did so, awakening her latent spellfire abilities in the process. In discharging the spellfire energy trapped in her body Shandril destroyed both the dracolich and its lair.



Seeking both revenge and the power of spellfire itself, the Cult of the Dragon pursued Shandril and her rescuers. This pursuit eventually resulted in the death of the Shad-owsil, the then-archmage of the Purple, and her dracolich mount Aghazstamn.

After the destruction of two dracoliches, Shargrailar flew forth of its own accord to punish the killer. Shargrailar attacked Shandril and her husband, Narm, as they traveled down a road. Diving out of the sun, Shargrailar first lashed out with several *lightning bolts* and then loosed its fiery breath weapon upon the couple. Shandril absorbed as much of the magic as she could with her spellfire abilities, but Narm was terribly wounded. Shandril blasted the night dragon from the sky, and with the help of a dwarven compatriot, destroyed the most powerful dracolich ever to tread the Realms. After these setbacks, the Cult considered the price to continue their dangerous quest for spellfire to have become prohibitively high. (See the novel *Spellfire* for more on these events and the sequel, *Crown of five*, for more on Shandril and her friends.)

In addition, the Sembian Cult has taken to equipping and supplying adventurers for exploring the ruins of the great elven city of Myth Drannor. Cult leaders believe that by controlling bands of explorers and adventurers, the Cult of the Dragon can gain experienced adventurers as pawns and liberate the awesome magic and treasure that is rumored to lie free for the taking in the Elven Court.

Thus, over the past decade or so, the Cult cell in Sembia has brought together adventurers, supplied them, and then sent them off (most often to their doom) in the elven ruins. It is believed that the Company of the Purple Cloak is one of these bands, for this company is known to have dubious origins and motives, and its name is evocative of the distinction granted to leaders of the Sembian Cult of the Dragon. This company has reportedly visited Myth Drannor three times.

More recently, it has been learned that Piergeiron Paladinson, one of the Lords of Waterdeep, destroyed the dracolich Kistarianth the Red. The Cult had restored the beast to life after it was originally killed by Piergeiron's father, only to have it slain by the same blade that had killed it once before. (See the *Undermountain: Stardock* adventure for more information on this event.)

Also, a dracolich of the Cult has been active recently in the Elversult area. Both the Harpers and emissaries of the Shou Lung Empire in Kara-Tur have become involved in the fight against it. (See *The Veiled Dragon* by Troy Denning.)

Cult of the Dragon Timeline

Below are the most important dates of relevance to Sammaster or his vile creation, the Cult of the Dragon. Not all of the events described herein were worthy of note elsewhere in this account, but they are included here to grant a perspective that narrative text simply cannot provide. Those events noted here are not the only actions Sammaster or his secret society took during the times noted, but rather the most well-known or significant ones that can be independently confirmed.

- c. 800 DR Sammaster First-Speaker, founder of the Cult of the Dragon, is born, though the location and exact date of his birth are lost to time.
- 817 DR *The Year of the Deadly Torch*
The traveling mage Mnetos takes the young Sammaster as an apprentice, noting the boy's fierce intelligence and fascination with magic.
- 818 DR *The Year of Broken Locks*
Mnetos the mage introduces Sammaster to the glory of Our Lady of Mysteries, the worship of whom Sammaster soon adopts.
- c. 825 DR Sammaster leaves the service of his magely tutor, Mnetos, having learned all he can from the itinerant wizard.
- c. 835 DR Sammaster achieves the status of an archmage at an age almost unheard of at that time. Sammaster wanders Faerûn extensively.
- c. 840 DR Sammaster's researches into the field of metamagic result in many new enchantments.
- 851 DR *The Year of the Jasmal Blade*
Our Lady of Mysteries appears to Sammaster, they dally, and the Goddess of Magic offers to make the archmage one of her Chosen. It seems that Mystra has foreseen the death of a Chosen and Sammaster is to be her replacement.
- c. 851-852 DR Sammaster meets with the Sage of Shad-owdale, Elminster, and learns how to use and control his Chosen powers, including *silver fire*.
- 855 DR *The Year of Cornerstones*
In the spring, Sammaster first meets Zhent slavers. Many die, including innocent prisoners.
- c. 855-861 DR Sammaster enters an extended period of exhaustive research into the processes of life, death, and undeath, creating several original necromantic enchantments before again taking to traveling Faerûn.
- 861 DR *The Year of the Exploding Or*
Sammaster meets and begins a relationship with Elué/Alustriel, Chosen of Mystra.



864 DR	<i>The Year of the Broken Brunch</i> Sammaster's relationship with Alustriel ends with disastrous results for Sammaster's emotional and mental well-being.		ture. Algashon's Cult adopts many of the revenue-generating schemes required to finance much of the Cult's operations.
865 DR	<i>The Year of Flamedance</i> Sammaster meets and is befriended by Algashon Nathaire, a mage and priest of Mystra's enemy, Bane, near or in Bal-dur's Gate.	c. 950 DR	Cult of the Dragon cells number near 100 at this time, the height of Cult power across Faerûn since the organization's inception.
866-874 DR	Sammaster and Algashon travel widely, with the duplicitous priest's words turning Sammaster toward bitterness, resentment, and evil.	c. 962 DR	The Cult reaches farther south than ever before with the creation of the cell in, around, and beneath the city of Hlon-deth in the Vilhon Reach.
875 DR	<i>The Year of the Stricken Star</i> Algashon coerces Sammaster into attacking his former lover, Alustriel of Silverymoon. Alustriel is wounded in Sammaster's initial assault and calls for aid from Khelben Arunsun and Laeral Silverhand, two more Chosen of Mystra. Sammaster is stripped of his Chosen powers. Algashon saves Sammaster from death. Sammaster, insane, embraces evil from this point onward.	971 DR	<i>The Year of the Children</i> The Cult's further expansion in the south is halted by the church of Tiamat when an underground Cult cell "tres-passes" on a similar group worshipping the Dragon Queen in the city of Surkh.
887 DR	<i>The Year of Fell Pearls</i> The first "translations" of ancient prophecies by the mad Sammaster are distributed, including his specious work on Maglas' <i>Chronicle of Years to Come</i> .	972 DR	<i>The Year of the Cairngorm Crown</i> After the recent defeat in Surkh, dissi-dents within the Cult begin to openly question Algashon's leadership and the weighty influence the church of Bane has had in Cult operations in the preceding years, with the mage Drakew-ings becoming a particularly outspoken opponent of the god of tyranny's place in the Cult of the Dragon.
902 DR	<i>The Year of the Queen's Tears</i> Sammaster's researches into necro-mancy result in the first successful Cult dracolich, Shargrailar.	c. 972-995 DR	The Cult refocuses its efforts to expand in the North, creating at least 10 new cells in this time period. The only known failure of the Cult to infiltrate an area during this era is in Silverymoon.
905 DR	<i>The Year of the Rotting Word</i> Sammaster finishes his principal work on the <i>Tome of the Dragon</i> , and copies begin to appear across Faerûn as the Cult's philosophy spreads.	c. 995-1000 DR	Factionalism within the Cult increases with most members joining either Algashon's reformational Bane-influenced camp or Drakewings' prag-matic faction.
916 DR	<i>The Year of the Sinhala</i> The Harpers and priests of Lathander ambush Sammaster and his entourage as they travel to visit two green wyrms in southern Cormanthor. Sammaster and an avatar of the Morninglord do battle. Sammaster's actions wound the avatar slightly before he obliterates Sammaster.	1001 DR	<i>The Year of the Awakening</i> Tuelhalva Drakewings encounters Gargauth trapped in a pit in Peleveran. Gargauth's words inspire him to plot a break from the Sembian Cult cell.
c. 916-940 DR	After Sammaster's downfall, Algashon leads the Cult underground for the first time since its creation in the prior cen-	1018 DR	<i>The Year of the Dracorage</i> Drakewings frees Gargauth. A horde of abishai baatezu summoned by Gargauth allow Drakewings to take over the country of Peleveran. Drakewings' fac-tion breaks from the Cult in Sembia and relocates to Peleveran. Less than one month later, Algashon musters and



- incites a Rage of Dragons and destroys the entire nation of Peleveran. Both Drakewings and Algashon perish. In a related event, a great Flight of Dragons assaults Zhentil Keep in this year. The old Keep is destroyed, but the city is saved by its wizards and priests of Bane. The Cult is widely blamed for the devastation in Zhentil Keep, and the inhabitants of the Keep first take note of the Cult as a recognized enemy (as opposed to a dimly perceived nuisance).
- 1065 *The Year of the Watching Wood*
Harpers in the North find the lair of the dracolich Alglaudyx and manage to destroy the undead creature, seizing its rich hoard for Harper coffers. With this newfound wealth, the Harpers invest in valuable properties and businesses in cities up and down the Sword Coast.
- 1222 DR *The Year of the Horn*
The Cult of the Dragon attacks the Harpers, who have fallen under the sway of the self-styled Harper King, the lich Thavverdasz. The subsequent arrivals of first Szass Tam and then Elminster result in a significant defeat for the Cult.
- 1225 DR *The Year of the Winged Worm*
A Cult of the Dragon cell forms in and around the city of Elversult. Initially led by human Cultists, the cell is later taken over and run by the first dracolich the cell creates, Cypress the black.
- 1279 DR *The Year of the Snarling Dragon*
A Cult of the Dragon cell near Luskan destroys itself when the dragons and dracolich involved with the cell do battle over treasure hoards.
- 1282 DR *The Year of Many Mists*
A lich calling itself Sammaster appears in the Desertsmouth Mountains and begins gathering humanoids, undead, and dragons into an army.
- 1285 DR *The Year of the Blacksnake*
An adventuring company of paladins, the Company of Twelve, attack Sammaster's stronghold. Nine are killed, but the lich's physical form is destroyed. Survivors confirm that this indeed was Sammaster First-Speaker.
- 1340 DR *The Year of the Lion*
Forces of the Sembian Cult cell battle elements of the Sembian military near Featherdale.
- 1356 DR *The Year of the Worm*
The most recent flight of dragons occurs, causing much havoc across Faerûn. Though the Cult of the Dragon claims responsibility, the true cause of such events remains a mystery.
- 1357 DR *The Year of the Prince*
The Sembian Cult of the Dragon cell becomes embroiled in a quest to obtain the spellfire power of a young Daleswoman. This young woman costs the cell three dracoliches, including Shargrailar, Rauglothgor, and Aghazstamn, and two Wearers of the Purple.
- 1361 DR *The Year of Maidens*
Four Cult of the Dragon archmages arrive outside of the Silvermoon and unleash spells to draw Alustriel out. She and Taern "Thunderspell" dispatch two of them easily, but Taern and other Spellguard members are soon kept busy with a dracolich unleashed on the southern walls. Alustriel defeats another Cult mage, but only the timely arrival of Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun and Laeral Silverhand saved Alustriel's life against the final archmage.
- c. 1364 DR
The Sembian Cult cell steps up its activities against the Zhentarim, attacking caravans and attempting to usurp control of various trade routes.
- 1365 DR *The Year of the Sword*
The Sembian Cult cell convinces Malygris, a blue dragon of Anauroch, to become a dracolich. This dracolich then attacks, kills, and replaces the ruler of the Great Desert's loose society of blue dragons.
- 1369 DR *The Year of the Gauntlet*
Piergeiron destroys the dracolich Kistari-anth the Red on the slopes of Mount Waterdeep during Halaster's Harvestide. The transformed red dragon was slain in life by Piergeiron's father, Athar the Shining Knight.



ONCE MORE was I visited by the cult's envoy, a mage—of dubious scent—that calls himself Namirrrha. He brought with him yet more sapphires and several more human spells with which I was unfamiliar. He was accompanied by a clawful of lackeys, minor magelings all. While they do their human best to disguise their fear and awe, it avails them little as they scuttle about, placing the enchantments I had ordered set about my lair and the surrounding area. None can now approach my domicile without my knowledge, nor can any, not even the arrogant Sussethilasis, now simply demand entrance. If that pretender to power again attempts to interrupt my contemplations, he will receive a long overdue lesson in real might. The so-called suzerain will learn of the power at my disposal, the true glory that I am destined to achieve!

Toward that end, Namirrrha and I recently finalized an arrangement that benefits both myself and his cult. Of all the mammals I have encountered, these cult members think more like my kindred than any others, including them in my schemes for power, glory, and dominion was a wise choice indeed, simply put, I agreed to let the cult provide me with information on certain caravans attempting to cross the Great Blight—what the humans call Anauroch. These caravans I will destroy or merely harry as is my wish, taking whatever prizes I deem to be worthy of satiating my hungers for food, wealth, knowledge, and status.

As Namirrrha detailed, members of his cult will demand a toll from all caravans that desire to cross the Great Blight in order to trade their petty goods. Those who refuse or otherwise decline the cult's protection are those upon whom I will visit my wrath. Additionally, Namirrrha and I have negotiated a portion of the wealth received from those traders wise or fearful enough not to risk my wrath. This percentage will be transported regularly to my lair, in forms that are easily portable by the weak frames of the humans—gems, with such sapphires as can be obtained, of course. Namirrrha also agreed to provide more of the mammals' minor magical items (the better to let me devote my attentions to greater matters) and a regular shipment of rare mammalian delicacies (whenever such can be procured and delivered fresh and alive unto me).

The cult uses this and many other methods for accumulating wealth, only some of which involve the traditional draconic tactics of force and ferocity, muscle and magic. They seem able to dupe the human and other doltish bipeds into believing that giving up a simple portion of wealth on a periodic basis is some-

how less irksome than the implied risk of losing everything. These creatures continue to amaze me with their ingenuity and—more importantly—their greed. They are, however, fortunate that none have been so foolhardy as to attempt such tactics against my kin. No true dragon, not even that pretender and coward Sussethilasis, would permit such simple sophistry to work; the perpetrators would be instantly and violently destroyed for their arrogance.

Namirrrha then told me of another tactic of this cult of theirs, this "mightiest of treasures" they have continually alluded to. Namirrrha revealed to me that Sammaster's greatest prophecy was that dead dragons would someday come to rule the world. To that end, the founder of this cult found a way to transform a willing dragon into an undead version of itself. I had heard that some mammals undergo such an abominable process to become a lich in an insane attempt to increase their petty power, but I marveled to myself that dragons would do so willingly. Namirrrha, now identified by me as a necromancer, must have sensed my doubt in my silence, for he stated that many dragons have indeed become dracoliches—or "Sacred Ones" as he calls them—and the Sacred Ones continue to cooperate with the cult. This wizard of the dead even claims that certain powerful ancient dragons known by reputation to all of my kind have long since seen the wisdom this course offered and become one of these, these-things.

While outrage tore at me from within and my sinews twitched to blot this vile mammal from existence for what he and his other insects would dare to do to our majestic forms, I exhibited magnificent control. While he babbled on about these-things— not needing food nor sleep, how these things need not fear the passage of time, and of the formidable and mighty powers they gained, I held back my fury. He is fortunate indeed that he did not offer me this "mightiest of treasures" or I would have assuredly sent him to dwell with that dead man Sammaster he seems to revere so highly.

By the rules of conclave, I allowed him to finish his wicked oration, then forbade him and all other cult members from entering my presence for one of the humans' years. I must reconsider my dealings with such beings, though I am bound by my word on the arrangement earlier struck.

—From the magical libram of recording of Malygris, very old blue dragon of southern Anauroch, circa 1364 DR



The Cult Today

"The present-day Cult of the Dragon is no less dangerous than the Cult that was created by Sammaster and later led by Al-gashon. True, it is not a unified organization, but the cells across Faerûn maintain good lines of communication between themselves and the dragons and dracoliches they serve.

"Gathered below is the current organizational structure, goals, members, plots, and descriptions of active cells of the Cult as I was best able to determine them. In many cases I have used the Cult cell in Sembia as a model, extrapolating broader information about the Cult's organization and behavior from that group since it is by far the largest, the most powerful, and the least subtle of the cells we know of.

"I have broken this information into two perspectives. The first concerns the human and humanoid members of the Cult cells and their particulars. After this, I present such knowledge as I have been able to collect regarding the draconic members of the Cult, both living and undead.

"Again, this information should not be taken to be a complete and authoritative report concerning all the activities of every cell and every dragon that operates or has connections to the Cult of the Dragon. Even I am limited in my efforts at gathering knowledge. I have been forced to rely more upon speculation here than makes me comfortable."

*—Oracle Veshal Questa,
Sibylite of Savras and Harper,
from her report to Belhuar Thantarth, 1370 DR*

Basic Information

The Cult's main activities today include serving as an intelligence-gathering and communications network for the evil dragons of Faerûn and the Cult's dracoliches—or "Sacred Ones" as they are commonly referred to in the Cult. (The number of dracoliches controlled by the Cult is unknown, but estimates range up to two dozen.) Cult members regularly visit the lairs of evil dragons, praise them highly, and tell them of the destiny Sammaster First-Speaker proclaimed for them: rulership over all of Toril. Cult members contribute large amounts of treasure to these dragons' hoards, offer any assistance at their disposal (healing potions and spells or an exchange of spells and other magical knowledge), enlarge or otherwise expand the dragons' lairs, add mechanical traps to the lairs, and generally work to persuade the dragons to actively cooperate with the Cult. Cult members also make all necessary preparations for those dragons that consent to become dracoliches. The Cult also tends any eggs or hatchlings that may be present in the dragons' lairs. In exchange for the Cult's services, its members ask the dragons for permission to use their lairs as emergency shelters and for a promise of aid should the Cult ever call on them using the Cult's *rings of dragons*. (Most often this means combating some foe of the Cult.)

Cult Members

Beyond serving the Sacred Ones, convincing more evil dragons to undergo the process to become Sacred Ones, and serving as strands in a communications web, what

goals do the average Cult members possess? To what does one aspire that worshipping an undead dragon—without even receiving the standard benefits of revering a true deity—seems a good choice for one's long-term benefit? While there is no denying the power of dragons and an undead dragon is a truly horrifying thought to most, simple awe at the power of such creatures cannot fully explain the success the Cult has shown in recruiting members over the last four centuries. The key to understanding the Cult of the Dragon's recruiting success, then, lies with understanding the types of people who join it. Of course, the information below is generalized, but it is valid for the purposes of this discussion.

For the average member of the Cult (if such a concept can be accepted), at least part of the attractiveness the Cult holds is similar to that of actual religions. Dragons are, perhaps, the most powerful mortal beings, and as such they are not so far removed from the idea of gods to many people. Indeed, there have been numerous recorded instances of tribes of primitive orcs, goblins, other humanoids, and even barbarian humans revering a local dragon as their deity. Of course, this illusion is often fostered by the dragons themselves, but these peoples are not so easily duped that they would give away control of their lives to any but the most powerful beings they have encountered.

Another aspect of the Cult that attracts many to it are the prophecies of Sammaster, specifically his infamous interpretation of the *Chronicle of Years to Come* regarding dead dragons ruling all. Many religions promote the idea of a doomsday, some form of a final day of judgment or other type of reckoning that may be personal (taking place at one's death) or a world-wide cataclysm. Such beliefs often promote the idea that only the faithful will survive the coming catastrophe or that the deities of the faithful, through their beneficence, will save their followers and usher in a Golden Age that supposedly follows most such prophesied reckonings. Now, while all religious scholars, learned priests, and secular mages cognizant of the Outer Planes know in our enlightened time that death is not an end but merely a doorway, many folk cannot seem to accept any world, any realm that does not currently surround them. Sammaster's promise of the fall of all humanoid civilizations and the rise of the dead dragons to rule the world is grounded here in the reality we call Toril, and therefore this fall is a terrifying concept to many. Sammaster's assurance that those who serve the dragons well now will be rewarded in some way in this future of dead dragon rulership helps to assuage those fears. In a way, joining the Cult is a comforting type of insurance against a coming doom.

Finally, there is also the sense of community that any group of people with common beliefs or goals can develop. Having friends nearby in a time of need provides a sense of security and belonging that should not be underestimated.

Of course, not every member of the Cult joins in an effort to insure his, her, or its future. Beyond any religious or philosophical leanings, the Cult can provide one with a quick means to power and wealth along with that sense of



belonging, of being someone special and even a member of some privileged elite.

Other Religions

Most Cult cells realize the deficiency in religious power within the Cult and, at least on a personal level, do not bar members from the worship of true deities so long as reverence is also given to the Sacred Ones, and, in some cells, to Sammaster. Several cells, including the Cult in Sembia, have priests within them or even among their leaders.

Obviously, upon considering the life story of Sammaster, the Cult considers the church of Mystra to be among its chief enemies. This is despite the fact that mages (necromancers specifically) provide the Cult with much of its magical might. Fortunately for the Cult, Mystra does not demand active worship in order for a mage to use the Art. Many of the Cult's necromancers also have now begun worshiping Velsharoon the Vaunted, the new god of necromancy, as a way to avoid even token lip service directly to her.

Also among the Cult's enemies are the churches of Tyr and Torm. As the blind god of justice and patron of paladins respectively, these churches and their affiliated orders are always prowling about, looking to root out secrets and end illicit activities of all sorts—with these very activities being the Cult's primary means of gathering revenues. There is also the fact that Piergeiron, the Open Lord of Waterdeep, not long ago killed the Cult dracolich Kistarianth the Red. The Paladinson's father had originally killed the dragon itself years ago—with the same blade that Piergeiron used to kill the undead Kistarianth.

More entries on the list of religious enemies of the cult are the church of Tiamat (which actually seeks not to destroy the Cult, but to annex the entire Cult into a branch of the church), Azuth, Chauntea, Helm, and Lathander. Because an avatar of the Morninglord killed Sammaster, the Cult holds especially great enmity for the followers of the Morninglord.

While the Cult is formally allied with no organized religion, worship of the following powers is most common among those Cult members who profess such beliefs: Talos, Talona, Xvim, Velsharoon, Shar, and Kelemvor. A smaller number of Cult members revere Cyric, Malar, Gargauth, and Tiamat, and a handful of Cult members also pay lip service to the draconic pantheon of gods (including Null), Garagos, or Siamorphe. Cyric's worship was much more prominent while he was also Lord of the Dead.

The Structure of a Cult Cell

The most common degree of involvement with the Cult does not even require active membership in a cell. Most people peripherally involved with the Cult of the Dragon are either its trading partners, its victims, or both. Most of these people are legitimate merchants, caravaners, and others that pay extortion fees to the Cult for "protection." As along as these unfortunates pay on time, the forces of the Cult do not impinge on or halt (destroy) the businesses that these people are carrying on. This degree of Cult involvement also encompasses those people who have little more

to contribute to the Cult than their devotion and their tithes. Simple farmers, herders, and other peasants—especially those in areas troubled by dragons—join the Cult in name only and tithe a portion of their money, crops, or other products from awestruck fear or a simple sense of self-preservation. Finally, this level of Cult involvement includes those moneychangers and others who hold or transfer Cult funds and those criminal rogues who do not belong to the Cult but who perform various tasks for the cell on occasion and who also fence their stolen goods to a Cult member—though, of course, such thieves may not know about and certainly would not care about their fence's allegiance to the Cult. The Cult pays well to aid in the "redistribution of wealth," and it is well-regarded in many underworld circles for that. (Of course, by serving as a fence, its members gain first shot at picking up interesting or useful items that thieves might not know the significance of.)

Foot Soldier/Mercenary: The lowest level of active, though often perfunctory, Cult membership is that of the Cult foot soldier (or mercenary in some cases). In exchange for his or her martial services, the Cult pays the soldier a monthly stipend and often boards the soldier as well in a common barracks at or near the cell's main meeting place. These men and women also may patrol any region the Cult actively controls or the vicinity (or domain) of Cult dragons or dracoliches. In any case, these folk normally have little to do with the operations of the cell. They simply go where they are instructed to, do what they are told to do, and kill those whom they are told to kill.

Warriors: The next tier within the Cult involves actual planning, management, and operations of the cell as a whole. Most of the persons involved at this level are, or were, warrior, rogue, priest, or wizard adventurers of one sort or another. Obviously, the men and women warriors are often in charge of the cell's military forces and security. Lesser warriors may accompany Cult soldiers on patrols or to perform various errands, and they are always included whenever a group of Cult members goes to meet with a dragon or dracolich ally. They do so not to attack the dragon they go to meet, but to protect the other Cult members during the journey and to safeguard whatever treasures and other valuables that the Cult intends to deliver to the dragon or dracolich.

Many warriors become successful merchants in the course of their adventures, and many of the most powerful Cult warriors are now retired from that profession. Instead, they make their money running or owning various merchant casters, many of the profits from which go directly into Cult coffers. More than one warrior has bought his way into a powerful, prestigious position within a Cult cell during the last 400 years, and some have even managed to assume total control of a cell. In fact, the majority of the Sembian cell's Wearers of the Purple are such warrior-merchants.

Rogues: Besides the wealthy warriors above, Cult rogues are responsible for gathering most of a Cult cell's operating funds. Most of these funds must periodically be gifted to any allied dragons or dracoliches in order to assure these draconic allies' continued cooperation with



the Cult. Some sages speculate that the Cult handles more moneys than any other organization in Faerûn; others place the Cult second only to the Iron Throne. Certainly, if its members put this immense wealth to some better use than pouring it onto evil dragons' hoards, the Cult might wield more power than it ever has.

Some Cult rogues are adventurers, others are freelancers who work outside a community's thieves' guild (if any), and, in a few cases such as the Sembian cell, most of a region's illicit activities are Cult-controlled via the local thieves' guild, which is either a direct branch of the Cult or Cult controlled. Many of the rogues in such areas are not aware that the guild's cut of their profits goes to the Cult, and few would care.

Priests: Here lies the greatest dichotomy within the Cult: For an organization with the word *cult*—with all its religious connotations—in its name, the Cult of the Dragon is as a whole almost devoid of any priestly power whatsoever. Not since the Banite ouster after Algashon's death has the Cult maintained any sort of official clerical contingency. While the Cult reveres dracoliches, these undead beings are not gods and cannot grant clerical spells or any other power commonly associated with priests. Some Cult cells also revere Sammaster as a sort of god, but heretofore the First-Speaker of the Cult has not granted a single spell or answered a sole prayer either. As a result, the Cult of Sammaster's creation is much more a secret society along the lines of the Knights of the Shield or the Kraken Society than any sort of evil religion or religious organization such as the churches of Cyric, Xvim, or Talos.

The Cult has much more influence in the secular world than the images conjured up by the word *cult*. While some Cult members likely do don robes to pray to the dracoliches and Sammaster in ancient, decrepit temples, chanting in some unintelligible tongue, doing so gains them little if any real benefit. Instead, the Cult has had to concentrate on insinuating itself into the secular world and its dark undercurrents in order to survive as it has for over four centuries.

That said, the Cult does have a few rogue priests in its ranks, dating back to Algashon, a dreadmaster of Bane. The Sembian cell has a priest who purports to serve Talos among its Wearers of the Purple, and priests of Xvim, Gargauth, Talona, Cyric, Shar, Velsharoon (very recently), and other evil gods appear from time to time as Cult members.

One of the most interesting conflicts that the Cult has recently become involved in as an entity is the renewed drive to prominence of the church of Tiamat in Unther and its quest to expand beyond the borders of that troubled nation into the rest of Faerûn. The Cult has apparently been targeted by Tiamat and her church as a good acquisition for the church's expansion. The clash between a fractious, secular organization and a small but clerically empowered religion will be most fascinating to observe—and could be used as a tool by the Harpers or others, such as the Emerald Enclave, to keep either group from gaining too much strength.

Wizards: The central core of most Cult of the Dragon cells is comprised of wizards. Without any substantive cler-

ical power, the Cult's mages and necromancers bear a heavy responsibility. Not only are they the Cult members who must aid the Cult's allied dragons with beneficial spells, scrolls, and magical items, they must also prepare the potions required for those dragons that are willing to attempt the conversion process and become dracoliches and prepare the dragons themselves for the procedure. In addition, as the Cult's primary source of magical power, they must try to cover the gaps in capabilities left due to the relative scarcity of clerics or other priests in the Cult. Creating and controlling lesser undead, creating or locating healing potions and other curative devices, aiding the Cult's secular forces in battle, and providing support and, often, leadership for the Cult's other plots keep Cult wizards busy.

While all types of wizards are accepted into the Cult, necromancers are in high demand. Considering the amount of necromantic research Sammaster performed and the processes that are part of creating a dracolich, this is understandable. Necromancers, too, often seek out a Cult cell for access to Sammaster's unique necromantic spells and the chance to work with undead creatures as powerful as dracoliches.

Some Zhentarim wizards who formerly lived in Zhentil Keep, both mages and specialty wizards of all varieties, abandoned their allegiance to the Black Network and turned to the various Cult cells after the *Cyrinishad* fiasco destroyed most of Zhentil Keep, including their homes. This influx of power from one of the Cult's traditional enemies was a tremendous coup for the Cult cells that gained their services and their knowledge of both wizardly matters and the inner workings of the Black Network.

Operatives: The final category of Cult member is that of the freelancer, the contact, the secret friend to the Cult. These women and men may or may not be actual members of the Cult, but they do work for a cell—or several in some cases—often without ever meeting more than one or two other Cult members who serve as their contacts.

Operatives include outright spies, Cult agents who worm their way into important or sensitive positions or locales so that they may gather and pass along information deemed important to the Cult. These operatives also may facilitate more efficient Cult operations by using whatever legitimate influence they possess to ease Cult activities such as smuggling, thieving, and the Cult's other revenue-generating plots. Many local authorities are firmly in the pockets of the local cell and allow Cult operations to go conveniently unnoticed in exchange for bribes or other favors. As an example, one Inlaster Ravenar, a merchant in Waterdeep's Trades Ward, is known to be a Cult operative. He regularly meets in his shop, which sells locks, lockboxes, coffers, and imported Kara-Turan puzzle boxes, with any of a small number of other operatives in the Sword Coast region.

Another brand of operative that the Cult uses is adventuring companies and parties. A member of a cell hires an unknowing group of wandering adventurers to perform some seemingly innocuous or even good-hearted deed that actually benefits the Cult in some way—such as ridding the



land of a meddlesome tribe of humanoids that happens to be interfering with Cult smuggling operations in the area. A Cult member who is assigned such operations normally has access to more than enough wealth to whet the appetites of most adventuring bands, and for many an offer of ample reward or payment is all that it takes.

The final type of Cult operative is the shadow. This is a woman or man who takes little, if any, part in the day-to-day activities and schemes of the Cult. This person's job is to remain an upstanding citizen, a legitimate merchant, or whatever role fits the locale until such time as the Cult needs him or her to act. (This category of Cult operative could also be considered to include such pawns as undead creatures, magically summoned creatures, and even several of the draconic hybrids created by Sammaster early in researches into draconic life; however, such beings are sufficiently dealt with elsewhere in this work.) These shadow operatives usually infiltrate the hierarchy or staff of the most sensitive organizations or places that the Cult considers to be a source or possible source of danger, such as the court of a local ruler who cannot be bought, the kitchen staff of a powerful member of the Zhentarim, or the household servants in a primary base of one of the powerful forces for good in Faerûn. Such operatives can typically take but one action for the Cult before their allegiance is known and their use is therefore at an end: Note the assassination attempt of a decade ago on the person of King Azoun Obarskyr IV of Cormyr by a Cult rogue masquerading as a royal stableboy after Azoun destroyed a fledgling Cult thieves' guild in Suzail.

Cult Plots

How does a cell of the Cult of the Dragon get enough money to bribe officials, purchase rare necromantic spell components, and contribute thousands of gold pieces to dragon and dracolich hoards every year? While specific tactics and particular schemes vary from cell to cell within the Cult, the majority of cells use many if not all of the revenue-generating stratagems below. (Unique ploys of individual cells are discussed later.) These intrigues fund the Cult's stated goals of convincing evil dragons to volunteer for the conversion process to become a dracolich and keeping loyal the dracoliches the Cult has helped create. These operations also have the benefit of making the Cult's cells (and hence, its members) wealthy—because every copper ever generated or gathered by the Cult does not, by any means, reach a dragon's hoard.

Legal Enterprises

Not every Cult cell generates all its revenue from strictly illicit sources. Many Cult members are wealthy merchants and these folk pour many of their profits from these entirely legal operations into the cell to fund other Cult activities, equip Cult soldiers and guards, purchase rare or expensive material components for vital spells, or obtain the services of non-Cult thieves, assassins, or other operatives when the need arises. Some of the cash so contributed to the cell goes back into the local economy in the form of bribes and kick-

backs to corrupt local officials, nobles, bureaucrats, and contacts with the local constabulary forces.

Another indirect, though appreciable, advantage of the mercantile aspect of many Cult cells is the ability of Cult merchants to gather and pass along important information among geographically separated members of a cell, between a cell and any allied dragons or dracoliches, and to friendly or allied cells across the face of Faerûn. If the Purple Dragons of Cormyr, for instance, are stepping up border patrols to cut down on smuggling and raiding in the area, the Cult contact in Tilverton (suspected to be Gaurnoth the Kegler, NE hm F4) alerts a Cult merchant leaving for Yhaunn and the Sembian cell of the Cult learns of the increased danger in a matter of days. Similarly, the Cult keeps itself apprised of any and all evil draconic activities and ambushes of such dragons by roving bands of adventurers. Some Cult cells also sell information that other underworld or black-market operators pay highly to possess.

Illegal Operations

While not every Cult cell generates its funds illegally, most of them do. And the methods they use are numerous. While the Cult is assuredly not the only purveyor of the numerous foul plots detailed here, most of the activities listed below are more often considered to be the province of an area's thieves' guild or merchant costers affiliated with (or part of) the Iron Throne. In fact, more than one Cult cell has become entangled with such groups in a surreptitious battle in the streets and dark alleyways of a city to determine which of the two factions would control certain activities in a region.

Smuggling: With so many business interests throughout its home region and, through its contacts with other Cult cells, other regions, smuggling any sort of item into an area can become quite simple for the Cult. Items that Cult cells often traffic in include stolen items that are too well known in the region they originate in to be sold safely in that same area, stolen magical items (often transported elsewhere for the same reason), potions or other substances of use to the Cult, illicit substances, poisons and other destructive substances, and, in some cases, hostages or slaves.

Kidnapping: While most cells do not make a regular practice of slaving (perhaps due to their founder's catastrophic encounter with Zhent slavers), some Cult cells kidnap nobles or important and highly ransomable people and surreptitiously remove them from their home countries or towns so as to obviate any rescue attempts from their families. For the most part, hostages are released after a sufficient ransom is paid. Families of future hostages would be reluctant to deal with the kidnappers (who never reveal themselves as being affiliated with the Cult, of course) if they have developed a reputation for killing hostages regardless of any payments received.

Blackmail and Extortion: A less extreme but still profitable means of gaining funds from communities near a Cult cell is blackmail. With the extensive information and underworld network most larger Cult cells operate, incriminating or simply embarrassing information can come into the cell's



possession. As an example, the local magistrate, chief constable, or other figure of authority and respect may have some dark secret such as a murderous or otherwise despicable past, romantic indiscretions, or some hidden allegiance to a secret society or power group (such as the Knights of the Shield, the Iron Throne, or even an out-of-favor noble house or heir to a throne now filled by another lineage). Extracting a regular fee from such individuals can provide the cell with a reliable source of income. Of course, the Cult members managing these operations must be certain not to gouge their targets too deeply or too often. Doing so could result in the target concluding that public exposure or humiliation is worth risking in order to be out from beneath the Cult's overly greedy thumb.

Extortion is similar to blackmail but is distinct in that it normally refers to situations requiring a single payment, after which the relationship between target and extortionist ends, most often when the extortionist receives payment and returns or destroys the object or information over which the fee was paid. One minor example of this could be when a Cult spy in the royal court discovers a love letter from a captain of the guard to one of the queen's lovely attendants who just happens to be married to an important foreign diplomat. The Cult cell then has the potential to make money, gain favors, and generally keep both the captain and courtier under its control as long as it possesses the incriminating letter. Of course, the Cult also could sell the letter to the diplomat for a sizable fee if the Cult of the Dragon really wants to start an imbroglio at court—perhaps to distract a monarch from another ploy.

Protection Rackets: Another related money-making ploy is often referred to by the Cult as "insurance." In a region where the local Cult cell dominates the underworld, Cult members regularly (usually once a month) visit all the merchants, bakers, coopers, blacksmiths, and other storefronts in the area the Cult controls demanding a portion of each enterprise's profits to prevent any untoward occurrences from "accidentally" happening to the business in question. (The cliched line that gives away this sort of operation most commonly goes something like the following: "This is a nice place you got here; it'd be a shame if anything were—to happen to it.") Robberies, break-ins, beatings, and fires await those who refuse or are unable to make payments to the Cult.

Another flavor of this same detestable practice is demanding a portion of the moneys or cargo being carried by caravans and merchants passing through the cell's area. This tradition goes back to the founding days of the Cult in Sembia when Sammaster gathered much of the starting Cult's funds by demanding as much as a 50% "tithe" of a caravan's goods to the Cult. With the threat of the destructive potential of a dracolich such as Shargrailar to back up the demand, Sammaster was most successful with this tactic. This ploy continues to be successful today, though it is seldom effective when used by a new, small cell or by one currently that does not have at its disposal the capability for substantial armed retaliation or draconic attack should the caravan refuse to pay the demanded price.

Usury: Another money-oriented plot many Cult cells run is that of giving out loans to desperate individuals, groups, or even local governments at exorbitant interest rates. The cells enforce such outrageous charges with the same threats that they use against entire caravans or simple cobblers: destruction or death at the hands (or fangs, claws, and breath weapons) of the Cult. Not all cells have the financial wherewithal to lend out any substantial portion of their funds via risky loans, but amounts under 1,000 gp down to even 10 gp are lent out to indebted farmers, merchants, and even fathers who lack a dowry to attract suitors for their eligible daughters. Subsequent payments must be made every month (or sometimes every tenday), and such loans are rarely, if ever, paid off due to their high rates. Debtors who miss a payment are often maimed or, under threat of such retaliation, coerced into performing services for the Cult—such as spying, theft, or even assassination. There is little hope for folk entrapped in such deals other than their being befriended by an upstanding noble, member of the guard, wealthy relative, or adventurer willing to pay off the debt for them or provide defense for them and their families while the Cult cell is rooted out. Many such unfortunate folk, seeing no way out, resort to flight or, even more tragically, suicide.

Selling Illicit and Dangerous Substances: The Cult of the Dragon is also gains revenues by promoting several of the vices of the weak, the unfortunate, the misled, and the disheartened who can find no joy and no solace in life. Such people are sometimes trapped by addictions that are fed off of economically by the Cult and promoted by its smuggling efforts. The Cult is more than happy to feed these souls' hungers for artificial escape, lining their own pockets and doing evil with the moneys so gained all the time. (A compatriot of mine, a priestess of Oghma named Tamelin whom I have the pleasure to work with on occasion once cited the habitual use of such poisons as "a failed quest for spirituality.")

Gambling: Another compulsive vice an unfortunate number of people succumb to is the thrill of gambling. While many might place small wagers as an occasional, pleasant diversion, for some the experience of gambling is as addictive as a dangerous drug. It is for these poor souls that the Cult's larger cells (those with enough cash and a hidden locale) operate standing or secret houses of gambling in regions where gambling is outlawed, taxed, or otherwise regulated. The larger of these houses often develop the air of a private club, with the local gentry and nobility wagering the fruits of their peasants' labors for a momentary thrill. Smaller Cult cells also stage games of chance for the newly wealthy: A party of adventurers, just back from a successful mission of some sort, is suddenly wealthy beyond their greatest dreams. If the Cult has a presence anywhere nearby, the adventurers are soon invited to a gambling house or to a less formal friendly game of chance sponsored by Cult fronts.

Brigandry: The final type of activity that most Cult cells engage in at some time is that of outright violence. Some Cult cells are better than others at the nonviolent means of collecting revenue discussed above. When those methods



fail, or at times when the cell's leadership decides that direct action is expedient, large-scale violence ensues.

For those cells with the membership or the payroll to buy mercenaries, attacks on merchant caravans can garner vast profits for the cell with a relatively minor risk. While the possibility of Cult raiders losing the battle or falling into a Harper trap, for example, does exist, identifying the raiders as anything more than simple bandits is often quite difficult—that is, unless a Cult dragon or dracolich participates in the raid alongside the human raiders.

Most raids take the form of an ambush staged along a commonly traveled road at a distance far enough from any towns or other outposts of civilization that no one could come to the caravan's aid. Who the owners and operators of caravans raided are normally makes little difference to the Cult. However, a favorite target of the Sembian cell's raiders are any Zhent caravans that can be found and ambushed. This is a tradition that dates back to Sammaster's days, when he took every opportunity to attack or cripple Zhent operations of all sorts in and around Sembia.

Cells with draconic allies may simply allow their winged compatriots to do most of the raiding. The cell provides the dragon or dracolich with the location, route, and speed of a caravan in exchange for a percentage of the valuables gained. In this way, the cell makes some money, builds its reputation (if the dragon identifies itself—a dracolich's allegiance is automatically attributed to the Cult), and thus makes future extortion attempts easier, and the dragon or dracolich is happy about adding to its hoard, terrifying and killing a bunch of mammals, and very likely getting a good meal out of the bargain.

Active Cult Cells, or Who, What, Why, How?

The cells detailed below are most assuredly not the only ones in current operation in Faerûn. Detailing even the cells known to the Harpers would consume the pages of many volumes equal to a report of this size. Instead, the cells discussed below are good examples from which much of the depth and diversity of this organization can be gleaned. The first cell discussed is the most well-known and the largest cell currently operating, the Cult cell that calls Sembia its home.

Sembia

A land of merchants, Sembia is the perfect place for a Cult cell to conceal itself as well as make a few gold pieces in extortion. After all, what Sembian merchant would not pay a bribe rather than risk being attacked by a dragon?

Saerloon is a hotbed of thieving activities and intrigue, some of which is supported by the Cult of the Dragon. The Cult uses this activity to smuggle in agents, spell components, and treasures to take to its bone dragon masters. The Company of the Purple Cloak, a large and well-appointed group of thieves, warriors, and wizards, are from Saerloon and are rumored to be agents of the Cult of the Dragon. Here, too, it is believed that the Cult of the Dragon has relo-

cated its most secret headquarters after decades of quiet growth to a stranglehold on Urmlaspyr.

The city of Urmlaspyr is a relatively open and indulgent one, but this guise is a simple cover for the Cult of the Dragon, whose Sembian cell called it home for many many years after Sammaster's death at the hands of Lathander. The Cult controls nearly every politician in town and not a thing happens in Urmlaspyr without its approval. It is assumed that there are one or more underground "temples" of the Cult of the Dragon in Urmlaspyr. (Secret meeting chambers of the Cult are referred to as such to foster the illusion of priestly or deific power in the Cult.)

Daerlun is run by Halath Tymmyr, an elderly merchant. However, Tymmyr's commander of the guard, Allathast (LE hm F8), pulls the simple Tymmyr's strings. And since Allathast is controlled by Cult magic and friends who are members of the Cult of the Dragon, Daerlun is a haven for the Cult. However, the Cult of the Dragon conducts no ceremonies or operations out of Daerlun, preferring to keep Daerlun as an ace in the hole and a place of refuge. The Cult uses Daerlun as a place to store its arms and valuables and a sanctuary for wounded and recuperating Cult members. Daerlun also has a small, little-publicized slave trade that deals in the criminals that are convicted in this Sembian city. The Cult of the Dragon runs this trade and profits from it.

Leaders: The Wearers of the Purple lead the large cell in Sembia as a coalition. Not all current members are known, but the Wearers of the Purple at the time of the Shandrill Shessair spellfire incident were known to be Malark the Mighty, archmage (dead); Zilvreen, master thief (NE hm T19); Salvarad, priest of "Talos" (LE hm C20 of Shar and Cyric; apparently Salvarad has a peculiar and unique relationship with these two deities, who both grant him spells, and only mouths reverence for Talos, whom he does not truly worship); and the Cult's warrior lord and leader, Naergoth Bladelord (NE hm F22). It is also likely that the Shadrowsil (NE hf M18) was Malark's lieutenant at the time of her death. A Dargoth of the Peldar Merchant Fleet; Commarth, commander of the Sembian border forces; and five other warrior-merchants completed the ranks of the Purple at that time. (All unnamed members are not less than 12th level.)

Known recent additions to the Wearers are Zannaster who, with the deaths of both Malark and the Shadrowsil, ascended to the role of Archmage of the Purple (LE hm M17), and Maenoth Silversword (NG hem F6/M6/T7, pretending to be only an F6/T7). Naergoth Bladelord, Salvarad, and Zilvreen are known to reside in Saerloon, and other Wearers of the Purple primarily reside there or in Urmlaspyr. (I have learned as much as this because the Harpers have managed to infiltrate the Sembian cell to it very core, as Maenoth is a Harper spy. How I learned this must, regrettably, remain my secret, but rest assured that the Cult could never hope to duplicate my methods.)

The Sembian cell's leaders have defined their standard Cult raiding party as a strike force composed of 1-5 fighters and 2-8 thieves of low- to middling skill (1d4+1 fighters and 2d4 thieves each having 2d4 levels). These are led by a Cult wizard of some experience (having 1d4+8 levels) who is sometimes a necromancer (40% chance) and is almost



Wearers of the Purple: Zilvreen, Naergoth, and Commarth

always equipped with magical items suited to his or mission and to personal protection (70% chance of possessing 1d4 magical items). (Several favorite items of such wizards are detailed in the Magic and Monsters of the Cult chapter.)

Plots: The Sembian cell has had difficulty replacing the three dracoliches it lost to the power of young Shandrill Shessair, especially Shargrailar the Mighty. Aside from the usual revenue-gathering efforts for a Cult cell detailed above, one of the Sembian cell's latest gambits to raise capital and induce terror is to hire out Cult assassins equipped with a small number of *daggers of life-stealing* to anyone who can afford to have his or her enemies killed. It is speculated that these *daggers*, or more specifically the lives they steal, are somehow being used to unnaturally age the cell's latest dracoliches, Malygris and Dretchroyaster, thus transforming them into even more powerful Sacred Ones.

Elversult

The town of Elversult is a battleground for a secret war between the Harpers and the Cult of the Dragon. The Harpers have allies in high places, including the best friend of the ruler of the city, Vaerana Hawklyn, as well as in the temples of the town. However, the black trades of assassination, poisoning, smuggling, and thievery in this town are dominated by the Cult of the Dragon. The Cult controls their operatives through a network of thieves, renegade clerics, and a few monsters. Cult members are known to include dopplegangers, thieves of all races, pirates of the Inner Sea, and a few priests of Shar and Malar. The Cultists

are headed by Indith Shalla, a nightcloak (specialty priest) of Shar (NE hf P16). The Cultists war continually with Zhentarim agents, independent thieves, pirates, and all others that fail to align themselves with the Cult.

The Purple Masks, an independent (for now at least) thieves' guild also tries to make its living here, but the Cult is becoming more efficient at rooting out the many less-skilled (or less-connected) thieves that make up the Purple Masks. Right now the Masks apparently maintain a tenuous neutrality; it is unknown if they will throw in with the Cult of the Dragon or attempt to make peace with the Harpers. However, one traveling bard, the notorious Leararn of Highmoon (CG hem B7), has reported the Purple Masks are actually agents of the Cult of the Dragon. Leararn says that the Cult is using the band of thieves as a foil to lure Harpers and other agents of good into revealing themselves so that the Cult can eliminate them. Whether this is, in fact, the truth is unconfirmed, but it is known that Leararn is wanted by the Cult, and it has circulated news that it will pay 500 gp for his head among the assassins and bounty hunters of Elversult and nearby Ilipur and Pros.

The port towns of Ilipur and Pros on the Lake of Dragons are perfect for the smuggling of magical texts, scrolls, spell components, and other small packages that the Cult needs on the Dragon Coast. Because of this, the two towns are a hotbed of tangled plots and counterplots between not only the Cult of the Dragon and the Harpers, but also the Astorians (a thieves' guild from Teziir) and the Night Masks (a thieves' guild in Westgate).



Leaders: Until recently, the Elversian cell of the Cult was run by Cypress, a dracolich that had been a black wyrm before his conversion. Some sources also insist that Cypress practiced the Invisible Art (psionics). Such powers are very rare on Toril, and even more so in a dragon. That these abilities were still present after his conversion to a dracolich is an additional worry for all good-aligned beings of knowledge and power.

In a convoluted series of events, Cypress had, via his Invisible Art, contacted Yanseldara, the ruler of Elversult, and had fallen in love and kidnapped her. He also kidnapped a wu-jen mage from the Jade Palace of Shou Lung trade coster and embassy in Elversult in an effort to create a potion that would cause Lady Yanseldara to reciprocate his feelings. The Bedine “witch” Ruha the Harper and the forces of the Jade Palace not only rescued the Lady and the wu-jen, but managed to destroy several of Cypress’ physical forms and finally the host (dracolich phylactery) that held his spirit.

Plots: With Cypress’ true death, the leadership of the cell in Elversult and even its continued existence could be in question. The cell’s highest ranking mage, Essarlym the Black (LE hm Nec15), is a likely contender to become Cypress’s successor given the importance of such wizards within the Cult. Olivari (NE hm T17) runs all the Cult smuggling operations in the region, however, and may make a power play by holding back shipments, thus hamstringing most, if not all, Cult operations. (If the Harpers or a coalition of good-aligned groups and individuals were to strike a decisive blow in the area now, before the intra-Cult

strife settles itself, I speculate that the entire Cult hierarchy in the area would collapse.)

Hlondeth

Known both as the “Jewel of the Vilhon Reach” and the “City of Serpents,” Hlondeth’s tall, graceful arches and spires belie the fact that the busiest port city on the Vilhon is ruled by a noble house of reptilian yuan-ti. The current ruler is Dediana Extaminos, a female halfbreed yuan-ti (LE fyh) who possesses an extremely keen mind—and a snake’s tail in addition to her legs. The city’s thriving trade brings with it much prosperity, so few merchants care who rules as long as the rulers do not interfere with the business at hand. (For more on the city and the Vilhon Reach region, see *The Vilhon Reach* game accessory.)

As with any large, bustling mercantile city, Hlondeth also suffers from its share of crime and underworld activities, such as smuggling and black-marketeering. It is this corrupt underbelly that first attracted the Cult of the Dragon’s attentions. Concerned with its weak position in southern Faerûn, the Sembian Cult cell launched an ambitious expansion into this city in the Year of the Shandon Veil (962 DR). Within a few decades, the Cult established a tiny but fervent cell in Hlondeth.

Over the centuries since then, the cell has remained small but recruiting efforts have continued to be successful. The Cult now controls a significant portion of the black-market and slaving operations within the city, though not through brute force. The Hlondethan cell is a masterful example of control acquired and enforced through a small



The Hlondethan Cult of the Dragon Cell



group of individuals in key positions throughout the city. The leader of the Cult cell in Hlondeth is a pureblood yuan-ti, and among the Cult cell's other members are a number of other purebloods plus human adventurers, merchants, tradespeople of varied professions, and some half-orc mercenaries. Corruption, fortunately for the Cult, is prevalent enough in Hlondeth that few consider where this official's or that guard's true loyalties lie.

The greatest obstacle to the Cult's expansion within the city is the city's government. Although some yuan-ti have been attracted to the idea of reptilian dragons coming into power across Faerûn, most of the Cult of the Dragon members are mammals. Since the rulers of Hlondeth are yuan-ti, a certain antimammal bias exists in the city's bureaucracy. Also, most warm-blooded criminals caught in the city (who do not have some prearranged release agreement with the guards) are not seen again—ample reason for the Cult to tread lightly.

Leaders: The current leader of the Cult cell in Hlondeth is no less than the son of the city's ruler. Dmetrio Examinos is a pureblood yuan-ti and so appears human except for small fangs that he can retract into the roof of his mouth. Dmetrio is evil in the extreme and is using the Cult cell to undermine his mother's rule and increase his own personal power. He intends the Cult to be his stepping stone to one day ruling first the city of Hlondeth and then the whole region.

To this end, Dmetrio is also courting the daughter of Baron Foemasher, the human ruler of Sespech. The young Gilsena may or may not be a Cult member, but it seems likely that she is unaware of Dmetrio's plan to marry her and then have her father murdered, thus gaining himself a foothold on power in Sespech as well. Baron Foemasher has resisted his daughter's relationship with the yuan-ti, but can do only so much to keep them apart. Gilsena is devoted to her father, but if he takes any further actions than his already obviously overprotective and cumbersome demands that a personal guard and a chaperon accompany his daughter at all times when Dmetrio and Gilsena meet, he would only drive the two closer together. If Foemasher knew of Dmetrio's Cult ties, however, the Baron would move to protect his daughter and damn the consequences.

Plots: Beyond Dmetrio's plot to oust his mother and plant the seeds of his future domination across the Vilhon Reach in Sespech, the Cult's primary goal currently is to strengthen its position in the city. The cell's recent attempted expansion into the Deepwash city of Surkh failed because another "cult" is already present in that city: Quite a few of Surkh's evilly inclined lizard man citizens have secretly joined the church of Tiamat, which holds a position in Surkh similar to that of the Cult of the Dragon in Hlondeth.

Both cults see this conflict as a test of their respective organizations and, while both intend to keep the clashes as surreptitious as possible, both an increased frequency of confrontations and escalating violence resorted to in such clashes are likely. Both groups are working to interfere with each other's money-making schemes—diverting or hijacking black-market goods, stealing or killing slaves, and pur-

suing other disruptive tactics—rather than openly battling each other, at least for the time being.

The church of Tiamat in Surkh is headed by Deiros Forktongue, a *wyrmkeeper* (specialty priest) of Tiamat's church (LE hm I'll). He emigrated to Surkh years ago, having been informed by his Dragon Queen that her message would be well received there. He is closely aided in the lizard-man city by Fire of the First Lizard Ssenidak *Wyrm-spear* (LE male lizard man F11/C9). While the church of Tiamat remains underground in Surkh, the Chromatic Dragon's priest has recruited many followers. Forktongue sees the conflict with the Cult of the Dragon, though distant, as a chance to prove Tiamat's assertion to her faithful that the Cult of the Dragon lacks leadership and is ripe for conquest by the right divine being—Tiamat in her Undying Queen form, of course.

Yartar

This small town, located in the Sword Coast North where the River Dessarin and the River Surbrin converge, is a bustling port with heavy barge traffic and many fisherfolk that ply its waterways. The town of 6,000 is ruled by the Waterbaron, a position to which one is elected for life. The current Waterbaron is Bellethe Kheldorna (LG hf Pal11), a worshiper of Tyr. The former Waterbaron was a member of the evil Kraken Society, and because of this, Bellethe spends much of her time rooting out corrupt officials and spies. (See the *Villains Lorebook* for more on the Kraken Society.)

The female paladin has her work cut out for her. Few of Yartar's residents live there for the climate. All are interested in making money and not all of them are concerned as to how they go about that task. As a primary stop on most northern trade routes, Yartar has attracted more than just a few Kraken Society members. The Zhentarim is rumored to have agents in the city, an *illithilich* (possibly a member of the Twisted Rune) has been reported in the region, and the local thieves are always trying to organize a guild. Bellethe also must deal with adventurers looking to legally or illegally latch onto some of the moneys that flow through the town, as well as the more maverick merchants who deal in less-than-legal goods and services.

Yartar is a cauldron of bubbling plots, schemes, and under-the-table alliances—but without any single unifying evil presence. Perhaps the most troubling problem for the Waterbaron is Pox, a female lich, and her dracolich mount, Saurglyce. Both of these undead beings are firm believers in Sammaster's teachings, and they seek to organize a Cult cell around themselves in the vicinity of Yartar.

Leaders: Pox was a 20th-level mage before she became a lich. Her origins are unknown, but she claims to have learned the formulae to become a lich from a copy of the *Tome of the Dragon*, though this claim is dubious, as other readers of the Tome and its copies have never mentioned instructions contained within it that effect the transformation of a humanoid into a lich—only dragons. She seems to hold a special hatred for the Zhentarim, the Zhentilar, and all people from Zhentil Keep, which may give some clue to her past life or even the origin of her sorcerous abilities.



Sauglyce, a mature adult white dragon before her transformation, serves as Pox's mount, servant, and confidante. Pox claims to have brewed the potion that transformed Sauglyce into a dracolich from the instructions found in the *Tome of the Dragon*. If such is true, it is likely that one of the pair know the location of a copy of that vile book—if they do not actually possess one.

The first that the Waterbaron and all of Yartar knew of these two was when Sauglyce traveled into the region from the north with the lich on her back. The two have settled into an unknown location in the hills around Yartar, and it is likely they have more than one residence. From the hills, they occasionally raid the caravans passing through the region or attack a farm or barge for food.

Once in awhile, they are spotted soaring high above the town as the sun settles slowly beneath the western horizon. The purpose of these dusk flights is unknown, though wise folk speculate that they make them to inspire awe and fear in the residents of Yartar. As the undead duo currently has little in the way of a support structure, these flights could be meant to impress potential Cult members into seeking out the pair to serve them. If so, a more direct effort on their part would probably prove more effective, as residents continue to avoid them as best they are able.

Plots: Gathering a traditional Cult cell around them in the region seems to be the pair's immediate goal. Thus far, the lich and dracolich have managed to persuade only a few small barbarian bands to follow them. Seeking out other undead creatures, evil dragons, and powerful wizards to either eliminate them as threats or convince them to join the Cult cell also would be probable objectives. The pair seems to lack extensive funds, however, and lately have stepped up their caravan attacks in a bid to remedy that situation.

Pox and Sauglyce do seem to be familiar with at least some of an organized cell's customary means of generating revenue. The lich has, in disguise, entered the town and tried to organize the thieves of the town into a Cult-dominated guild. Pox has met with only limited success as the primarily female cutpurses and scoundrels of the town are notoriously independent. The already-established fledgling thieves' guild of Yartar—known as the Hand of Yartar—has also resisted the lich's more forceful attempts to take it over, with its members disappearing from the lich's traps whenever they choose.

A less obvious reason for the two's decision to move to the area may be to keep an undead eye on the new confederation/kingdom known as Luruar and its first ruler, Alustriel (whom her subjects insist on calling "Queen"). Many within the Cult of the Dragon still hold much enmity toward the former High Lady of Silvermoon, blaming her for much of Sammaster's anguish during his life. Sammaster wrote of this heartache with much bitterness in the *Tome of the Dragon* and more than a few Cultists have sought to make their names by eliminating the lady who "failed Sammaster in his time of need." Whether the undead pair intend to act merely as observers or as the vanguard for a larger Cult strike force is unknown.



Pox and Sauglyce of Yartar



Dracoliches of Note

Below are detailed three dracoliches of note, and later in this chapter a list of most of the known dracoliches and Cult-affiliated dragons is presented. Elsewhere in this book (in the Magic and Monsters of the Cult chapter) is a selection of dragon spells that all dragons and dracoliches may cast. These magical capabilities should be kept in mind when facing any of these fearsome creatures.

Aurgloroasa, “The Sibilant Shade”

Aurgloroasa (ore-GLOR-oh-ASS-ah) is a dracolich who was a venerable shadow dragon before her transformation. She claims the lost dwarven city of Thunderholme in the southern Thunder Peaks as her subterranean domain and Sembia and the southern Dalelands as her sphere of influence. The Sibilant Shade (Aurgloroasa’s common appellation) has dwelt amidst the ruins of the legendary dwarven halls for over three centuries (as a dracolich for two score and eight years), and she is well ensconced in her domain.

Aurgloroasa is an annihilist, a specialty priestess of Null the Death Wyrm, and she is obsessed with her research into death, undeath, necromancy, and shadow magic. The Sibilant Shade considers herself the Death Wyrm’s most devout follower, and her transformation into a dracolich was well-nigh inevitable. It is Aurgloroasa’s ardent wish that she become Null’s consort (and a demipower in her own right) in the not-too-distant future. Toward this end, the great shadow dracolich aspires to bring a large swath of Faerûn under her shadowy aegis and create a draconic theocracy in the name of the Night Dragon.

The Sibilant Shade is a gigantic representative of her (former) species, and she is extremely vain. The slow decay of Aurgloroasa’s physical form is the one drawback she sees in dracolichdom. Aurgloroasa employs a combination of preservative spells and carefully crafted illusions to maintain a lustrous, living sheen to the translucent, night-black cloak that is her form. One example of the wyrm’s obsessive fastidiousness is the fact that she has carefully recovered and stored every single scale she has shed in her entire life (or unlifed).

While neither cowardly nor resigned to fate, Aurgloroasa chooses to operate exclusively from the shadows—a sinister, brooding puppeteer—and seeks only small, gradual shifts in the flow of events. She is well aware that immortality—in both life and death—is earned on a daily basis.

Aurgloroasa displays a morbid fascination with the cataclysmic and subtle miscalculations of those she respects, including other dragons and powerful wizards and priests, and she will not engage in any action without first analyzing all possible modes of failure. It is because of this preoccupation and not just her appearance that Aurgloroasa is known to some Dragon Cultists as “Old Doom and Gloom.”

Aurgloroasa has maintained a greater degree of anonymity than many of her peers thanks to her deliberate and cautious nature and to her penchant for masquerading as her rivals. More than once she has inflicted a terrible punishment on a town in the guise of a rival. When, as a matter of course, the surviving townsfolk regroup and send out for experienced dragon hunters, the Sibilant

Shade’s deception ensures that it is a rival wyrm who draws the attention of their spells and blades.

Aurgloroasa is a skilled and practiced linguist (despite the fact that she can communicate with any intelligent creature), and she is fascinated by raconteurs who can bewitch an audience with naught but their voice. “The Voice in the Shadows,” as Aurgloroasa sometimes styles herself, derives great pleasure from transfixing lesser beings with her dragon fear and then slowly weaving a web of lies so tight that her victim’s terror dissipates and his or her tongue speaks of secrets held close to the heart.

The relationship between the Sibilant Shade and the Cult of the Dragon was woven over the course of a decades-long courtship and, as it stands, incorporates a tangled web of alliances and rivalries. Aurgloroasa was located and approached by Cultists from the Sembian cell in the Year of the Creeping Fang (1305 DR) in the wake of the Archendale “dragon war” (described below). While her “seduction” by the Cult was a relatively simple affair—Aurgloroasa had already decided to undergo the transformation and had deliberately left a trail of clues by which the Cult was sure to locate her—the Sibilant Shade succeeded in extorting an exorbitant sum (even by the Cult’s standards) from the wealthy Sembian cell before agreeing to the process. Aurgloroasa’s shadowy touch was evident even as she underwent the transformation in the Year of Lurking Death (1332 DR): The great beast wisely bribed, blackmailed, and befuddled enough of the participating Cultists to severely weaken the magical bindings normally incorporated in the ceremony to ensure a dracolich’s continued involvement and assistance in the Cult’s stratagems.

In the years following her transformation, Aurgloroasa has played both sides of the fence on countless occasions. Many times she has secretly aided Cult foes like the Zhents or even the Harpers so as to ensure a note of desperation when the Wearers of the Purple call on her for assistance. The shadowy dracolich maintains a secret network of her own (both within and outside of the Cult membership) to spy on and manipulate her putative allies and to ensure that much of that organization responds to her subtle touch.

After the destruction of three Sacred Ones in the debacle surrounding the Sembian Cult cell’s efforts to acquire spellfire, Aurgloroasa has emerged as the preeminent dracolich in the Merchant Kingdom. At her instigation, the Wearers of the Purple have begun an extensive campaign to cultivate new candidates among the younger evil dragons of the region. Aurgloroasa, of course, has ensured that the list of candidates consists primarily of dragons she has already bound to her will through magic and obligations.

Aurgloroasa’s Lair: Aurgloroasa’s lair is located in the southern Thunder Peaks, several leagues north and west of Highcastle. The Sibilant Shade’s hoard now occupies the throne room of the last regent of Thunderholme, and the animated bones of those dwarves who failed to flee her wrath stand as skeletal sentinels in their fallen city, eternally serving their undying queen.

The dwarven legends of Thunderholme speak of a city of the finest, noblest miners and metalsmiths in the Realms. Dwarven lore states that inhabitants of Thunderholme were favored by Dumathoin, Keeper of Secrets Under the Moun-



tain. In but a single day the halls were emptied when the Silent Keeper swept the dwarves of Thunderholme away to live in paradise with him. The few dwarves who did not want to accompany Dumathoin sealed the doors before they left, and the halls have never again been disturbed. One mystery associated with the legend of Thunderholme has always been the fate of those dwarves who stayed behind, since they never arrived in any other dwarven hall. The truth behind this hopeful tale is horrific and rooted in the whispering evil of Aurgloroasa.

In the Year of Dark Stalking (989 DR), dwarven miners from a remote outpost of Thunderholme inadvertently broke into Aurgloroasa's lair and roused the very old shadow dragon from a decades-long sleep. Aurgloroasa quickly dispatched the startled dwarven miners and then cleverly caved in the tunnel by which they had reached her lair so that it appeared to be a natural cave-in.

For the next dozen years, Aurgloroasa observed the comings and goings of Thunderholme from afar by means of powerful divination magics and a network of hidden spies she summoned from the Demiplane of Shadow. In the Year of the Awakening (1001 DR), Aurgloroasa began to whisper dark thoughts in the dreams of High Old One Dagan, son of Belgin, blood of Jangarak. Over the next 33 years, the ambitions of Thunderholme's high priest of Dumathoin grew—as did his madness and his obsession with death. He took to calling the voice from the shadows the “Sibilant Shade,” a title which pleased Aurgloroasa well. By following the advice of the ever-present whispers in the shadows, Dagan rose to a preeminent position in Thunderholme, second only to King Emerlin III. When the aging monarch died in his sleep shortly after the disappearance of his only child, the crown prince, on a trade mission to Selgaunt in the Year of Bane's Brood (1034 DR), Dagan was quickly named Regent of Thunderholme. (Both the king and the prince were victims of Aurgloroasa's shadowy agents.)

Within months, construction was begun on a grand temple to Dumathoin in the heart of Thunderholme. Over the next 20 years, Dagan's madness began to manifest publicly as he required more and more of the city's artisans to participate in the construction of the temple and the extensive crypts beneath it. When all was finally complete in the Year of the Tolling Terrors (1054 DR), in a grand ceremony of dedication attended by all the dwarves of Thunderholme, the dwarven regent-priest dedicated the temple complex to Null, not Dumathoin, and named it the Necropolis of the Wyrms. As news of the unspeakable deed spread through the crowd, Dagan completed the unholy ritual by summoning the “avatar” of his new god—and Aurgloroasa was loose in the city. In the chaos that followed, fewer than 30 dwarves escaped the maelstrom of evil that had been unleashed. Within a tenday, Thunderholme was a lifeless city, reeking of decay.

Over the next few weeks, the Sibilant Shade hunted down and killed every single dwarf who escaped the carnage in Thunderholme, but she did not recover every magical *runestone* capable of revealing and opening the sealed gates of the dwarven city. Several *runestones* still exist outside her hoard and are scattered across the Realms, their

true purpose often unknown to those who happen across them. Four *runestones* have surfaced in recent times, and their current possessors are listed below.

- The Sembian Cult of the Dragon cell is believed to possess at least one and possibly two of the *runestones*. It was by means of the first *runestone* recovered by the Wearers of the Purple that Aurgloroasa was originally contacted.
- A closely guarded secret of the Mistress of Stars of the Fall of Stars adventurers' club in Harrowdale Town is that an adventurer and since-fallen member named *Orytar* found one of the missing *runestones* as well, and that key has facilitated numerous (failed) attempts by club members to meet the Challenge of Orytar (described below). The Mistress of Stars accompanies each expedition to Thunderholme to sunder the city's portals, and she then waits outside Thunderholme so that when the expedition fails (as they invariably do), the *runestone* can be returned to the club's vaults until the next foolhardy attempt.
- Another *runestone* was recently purchased from a fisherman in Westgate by a band of adventurers known as the Seekers who, by chance, spotted the stone being used to scale fish and recognized its importance. The group is known to have set out from Saerloon to find the lost city, but no word of their exploits has ever been revealed, even after their brief return. The Seekers were last seen headed east aboard the *Widow's Ire*, bound for Aglarond.

The lost city of Thunderholme has been transformed into a vault of death. The stale and stagnant air reeks of death and loss. Immense halls and chambers supported by titanic pillars and cut from the heart of the living mountain have become magnificent sepulchers. Immense friezes depicting dwarven nobility and the daily lives of the common folk stand as monuments to the long-dead inhabitants. Hordes of skeletal dwarven warriors, craftsmen, and laborers wander the dusty vaults in a twisted parody of their former lives.

Well into the mountain's core stands a monstrous and ghastly edifice in the center of a cavern of flickering shadows. The Necropolis of the Wyrms resembles the towering Untheric ziggurats built in honor of Enlil and then Gilgeam ages ago. Groups of shadows and other denizens of the Demiplane of Shadow stalk the catacombs beneath the temple, their hunger eternally unassuaged. The venerable shadow dracolich Aurgloroasa sleeps haunted dreams in a bed of shadowstuff in the temple's central chapel amidst a flickering tapestry of *wards, gates, and lurking traps*.

Aurgloroasa's Domain: Aurgloroasa claims only Thunderholme for herself, but she pays little heed to the competing claims of rival wyrms with territorial ambitions in the Thunder Peaks region. The Sibilant Shade has driven off or killed every dragon who dared challenge her passage in the region, and she is now warily ignored and/or avoided by potential rivals and young upstarts alike. Some younger wyrms, such as Thraxata, pay the elder dracolich annual tribute for the privilege of remaining alive. (Thraxata is a young red dragon who lairs atop the Bloodhorn, a great mountain crag overlooking the ruins of Sessrendale.) Others—most notably the mature adult red dragon Neva-



Aurgloroasa, "The Sibilant Shade"

larich—must serve Aurgloroasa whenever she demands. (Nevalarich also lairs in the southern Thunder Peaks, and he is becoming well known for his frequent raids on ships traversing the Neck. Effectively, Aurgloroasa is the greater power keeping Nevalarich in check that some in Azoun's court have speculated must exist.)

Before becoming a dracolich, Aurgloroasa used to hunt extensively throughout the horse farms of Kultha and amongst the red sheep herds of the Thunder Peaks, and she still occasionally preys on the wyverns of the Wyvernfang at the eastern end of the High Dale to keep their population in check. The Sibilant Shade rarely ventures farther west than the Vast Swamp or farther north than Thunder Gap, although her reasons for avoiding the Forest Kingdom and the former lands of the Elven Court are unknown.

In practice, Aurgloroasa considers all of Archendale, Sembia, Tasseldale, Featherdale, Scardale, High Dale, and the southern Thunder Peaks as her sphere of influence, and she has an extensive network of Cultists and independent agents at her disposal throughout these lands. While she does not seek to directly control this territory, the Sibilant Shade actively seeks to manipulate events in the region to her desires and gradual enrichment.

The Deeds of Aurgloroasa: Aurgloroasa was born in the Year of the Black Dawn (426 DR) to Shhuusshuru, who later preceded her into dracolichdom with the aid of the Cult. Aurgloroasa skulked about her mother's domain in the Far Hills for nearly two centuries before she established her first lair in the southwestern Thunder Peaks in the Year of the Ensorcelled Kings (616 DR) in her 190th year. Aurgloroasa's

arrival was noted by elven rangers from Cormanthyr and dwarven scouts from Thunderholme, but neither nation chose to challenge her newly claimed demesne at that time, much to their later regret. Aurgloroasa's relative quiescence and the tumult that shook the Heartlands in the following century removed her from the concerns of all but the most ardent dragon hunters (who never managed to even engage her in battle), and she was slowly forgotten by most inhabitants of the surrounding regions.

Although her subterfuge resulting in the fall of Thunderholme is probably Aurgloroasa's greatest triumph, the Sibilant Shade has been the architect behind countless shadowy campaigns in the Merchant Kingdom of Sembia and the surrounding lands. The Night Knives, an autonomous band of thieves active in Saerloon, Selgaunt, and Urmlaspyr, have inflamed more than one merchant's war at Aurgloroasa's hidden direction, including the near-disastrous three-year-long civil war that threatened to tear Sembia asunder from the Year of the Silent Steel through the Year of the Raging Flame until it ended in the Year of the Dusty Throne (1254 DR to 1256 DR) with the death of three-quarters of the ruling council and two successive Overmasters. The apparent failure of the campaign by the Wearers of the Purple to infiltrate and control Featherdale after their defeat in the Battle of the River Rising in the Year of the Lion (1340 DR) was in truth an elaborate and mostly successful ploy by Aurgloroasa to dispose of the meddling Mhzentul, crafter of the *Seven Lost Rings* and scribe of *Mhzentul's Runes*, and obtain the archmage's library of arcane lore for her own perusal.



Aurgloroasa particularly enjoys attacking ships, through her network of agents, whose owners fail to pay her proper tribute. Only the most senior leaders of the dragon's far-flung protection racket have any idea that Aurgloroasa is the power behind their extortionist threats; ship-owners are simply made aware that those who fail to pay proper tribute frequently disappear. Aurgloroasa's favorite hunting grounds are located near the mouth of the Lake of Dragons in the relatively narrow strait known as the Neck. However, before preying on ships, the Sibilant Shade always assumes the guise of Nevalarich, who is already known to hunt in the region. Aurgloroasa has been spotted off the coast of Westgate at least twice in her true form, and the "Ballad of the Shadow Storm," popular in that city prior to the death of King Verovan, refers to her plundering and sinking of the treasure-laden Winsome Wyrms just outside the harbor in the Year of Watery Graves (1091 DR) during one such visit. Aurgloroasa considered seizing Westgate outright during Verovan's reign, but the fate of Anaglathos, dragon ruler of Turmish, in the Year of the Purple Basilisk (1247 DR) reaffirmed her practice of wielding power from the shadows.

Some 70 winters ago in the Year of the Claw (1299 DR), the Sibilant Shade clashed at least once with Arngalor, an adult black dragon of exceptional size who laired in the Heart of the Mine at the head of the River Arkhen. Prior to the battle, Aurgloroasa cloaked herself in the guise of a blue dragon, and she then flew into Archendale blaring her challenge. When Arngalor foolishly came forth to do battle, the great dracolich tore him to shreds after a long and terrible fray still known to Arkhenfolk as the "dragon war." Only slightly injured, Aurgloroasa maintained her disguise and flew off raggedly to the west as if gravely hurt. She then returned via subterranean tunnels to plunder Arngalor's hoard before it could be recovered by enterprising Arkhenfolk or other wyrms. The continuing efforts of the Cult of the Dragon to locate Arngalor's "lost" hoard are of great amusement to Aurgloroasa, and the shadowy Sacred One has not yet let the Wearers of the Purple in on her decades-old ruse.

In recent years, Aurgloroasa has ensured a steady stream of sacrifices through an unusual ploy involving the Fall of Stars adventurer's guild in Harrowdale Town. Aurgloroasa enspelled a hapless adventurer by the name of Orytar who stumbled across Thunderholme to return to his far-off comrades with a conveniently provided *runestone* and issue what would come to be known in the club as the Challenge of Orytar: "Seek out the great shadowy wyrm who lairs beneath the Peaks of Thunder and return in triumph bearing aloft her fabled Eye of Shadow if ye be truly adventurers of lore." Ever since the enspelled Orytar issued his challenge, a steady stream of magical might borne by tasty snacks has enlivened the gloom of Thunderholme. Orytar returned four times to Thunderholme so Aurgloroasa could renew the spells in which she had ensnared him. Each time save the last he returned to mock his comrades and spur them on to further foolishness. His death now stands as a permanent monument to the foolish goal in pursuit of which so many rash adventurers have thrown their lives away.

Aurgloroasa's Magic: Aurgloroasa employs a wide variety of unusual and unique dragon spells and magical items due to her status as an annihilist and member of Null's clergy, with an emphasis in her draconic spell abilities on spells and effects from the school of necromancy and the school of shadow magic. Aurgloroasa is known to frequently employ the uncommon draconic spells *shadow scry* and *shadow dragon*. Sembian Cultists (and, as a result, Harper infiltrators) have learned of at least three rare or unique spells employed by the Sibilant Shade: *sharpwings*, *shadow serpents*, and *project shadow*. The means by which Aurgloroasa assumes the shape and hue of other dragons and maintains that guise in battle is as yet unrevealed, but it is likely related to the draconic spell *scale shift*. (Shadow magic is described in *PLAYER'S OPTION®: Skills & Powers* and in *PLAYER'S OPTION: Spells & Magic*. A majority of spells in the school of shadow magic overlap with either or both the school of illusion and the school of necromancy. Shadow magic focuses on magic having to do with shadowstuff and the Demiplane of Shadows.)

In addition to her command of priest and wizard spells (used as a dragon spellcaster—verbal-only spell components and casting times of 1), the Sibilant Shade is believed to possess a trove of magical items, many of which she has learned to employ. Some of her most treasured items of magic including a *circlet of the wyrm* presented to her by the Cult of the Dragon and *wing armor* forged by dwarven slaves kidnapped and brought to Thunderholme by the Cult at her direction.

Sharpwings (Wiz 2; Alteration)

Range:	Touch
Components:	V
Duration:	1d4+2 rounds
Casting Time:	1
Area of Effect:	One pair of dragon's wings
Saving Throw:	None

This spell is favored by dragons well skilled in the use of their wings to buffet opponents. The spell alters the spellcasting dragon's wings so as to make the leading edge of each wing as sharp as a well-honed blade and as strong as steel. It is not possible to visually observe the blade edge, but anyone who touches the front-most ridge of an affected dragon's wing notes the deadliness of this magical effect. In melee, prior application of a *sharpwings* incantation doubles the normal base damage inflicted by wing buffeting; damage is increased to the equivalent of twice a normal claw attack. The chance to knock a creature prone on a successful wing buffet is unaffected by this spell.

Shadow Serpents

(Wiz 4; Divination, Alteration, Shadow, magic)

Range:	Touch
Components:	V
Duration:	1 day/level to a maximum of 10 days



Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

By means of this spell, the spellcaster creates a horde of tiny serpents composed wholly of shadow-stuff. The number of shadow serpents created is $10d8 + \text{caster's level}$ (maximum of 100). Each shadow serpent is semiautonomous and cannot be destroyed except by means of a dispel magic spell or similar incantation or by exposing them to direct, bright light with no area of shadow or darkness within 5 feet of their current location. Shadow serpents are not intelligent, nor are they actually alive or even physical beings, and they have no attacks or defenses. *Shadow serpents* by nature flit about mindlessly, never leaving areas of shadow or total darkness and all the while observing everything that goes on around them. Shadow serpents have an effective movement rate of 36, but only if directed by the spellcaster. Otherwise they mill about in one location, typically in a circle or sphere approximately 30 feet in radius.

The spellcaster can direct his or her horde of serpents collectively, but not individually. For example, a spellcaster could direct the entire group of *shadow serpents* created by his or her incantation to explore a house, or a room, or an alley, or follow a specific person, but a spellcaster could not specifically direct a subset of the entire group to do one task while other group(s) do something different.

By means of this spell, the spellcaster can scry a scene from afar through the myriad eyes of his or her *shadow serpents* (unlimited range, but always within the same plane of existence). However, the constantly shifting and overlapping images preclude easy comprehension of what is being observed. As a result, in any given round, there is a percentage chance equal to the number of serpents in existence that the caster can discern what is being observed from the myopic montage.

A casting of *shadow serpents* lasts until the spellcaster wills it to cease, the spell duration expires, or all the serpents have been destroyed. Some claim that the faint sound of slithering serpents can be heard in an enclosed area infested with *shadow serpents*, but others claim this is madness.

Project Shadow (Wiz 6; Alteration, Shadow Magic)

Range: 10 yards/level
Components: V
Duration: 1 round /level
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

Project shadow must be cast while the spellcaster is within a region of shadow or darkness. *Project*

shadow is a shadow magic variant of the more commonly known *project image* spell. Like the latter incantation, this spell enables the spellcaster to create a duplicate of himself or herself, projecting it to any spot within spell range. Unlike a *project image* spell, however, *project shadow* creates a duplicate of only the spellcaster's shadow. The shadow performs actions decided by the spellcaster—walking, speaking, spellcasting—conforming to the actual actions of the spellcaster's shadow unless she or he concentrates on making it act differently (in which case the spellcaster is limited to half movement and no attacks). Note that spells can be cast through the projected shadow and function as if they had been cast while the spellcaster was in the projected shadow's location.

Whereas a *project image* spell is commonly employed to deceive opponents into believing they are facing the spellcaster's physical form, a *project shadow* spell is rarely effective in this fashion. Instead it is commonly used to hide within regions of darkness or shadow so as to surprise an opponent, or to conceal the spellcaster's identity when she or he needs to parley with a potentially dangerous opponent.

A projected shadow can be dispelled only by means of a successful *dispel magic* spell, exposure to direct bright light, or upon command from the spellcaster. All other attacks pass harmlessly through it. A *project shadow* spell may also be cast through any scrying device (whether it be physical, such as a *crystal ball*, or a magical effect, such as that created by a *magic font* or *shadow serpents* spell), but additional spells cast do not pass through the scrying device. The image must be within view of the spellcaster projecting it at all times, whether scryed or observed directly, and if his or her sight is obstructed for any reason, the spell is broken and dispelled.

Unlike a *project image* spell, whether or not the wizard is invisible at the time of the spellcasting has no effect on the projected shadow. If the spellcaster uses *dimension door*, *teleport*, *plane shift*, or a similar spell that breaks his or her line of vision, the *project shadow* spell ends immediately.

Aurgloroasa's Fate: As Aurgloroasa slowly extends her influence throughout Sembia and over the Cult cell based in the Merchant Kingdom, she is drawing increased attention to both her existence and her elaborate machinations despite the shadows in which she cloaks her every plot. Given her long history of deception, Aurgloroasa seems likely to attempt to reverse this unwanted and increasing attention within a decade or two. Aubaerus the Ravenmaster, a hierophant druid active in the Thunder Peaks region, speculates that she might even stage her own death so as to further withdraw into the shadows.



Daugothoth, "The Creeping Doom"

This undead wyrm bears watching. Not only is his influence quickly spreading, but the dracolich Daugothoth (DOUR-goh-thoth), who was originally a black dragon, is attempting to gain some abilities of other types of dragon and to come back to life sufficiently to breed true and found his own new dragon species. The twin obsessions of achieving personal supremacy and fathering a new race have kept Daugothoth busy for over a century while he improved his abilities and sought a suitable mate—or planned how to construct one, much in the same way as he has been modified in undeath.

The implications of Daugothoth's fascinating endeavor are dark indeed. The only reason hordes of adventurers have not descended on the dracolich, seeking his destruction, is that they do not know about him. Plenty of wild rumors are, however, spreading. Both Tolgar Anuvien and Malchor Harpell are (independently) beginning to uncover the location and activities of the undead wyrm, but the only folk who know the broad truth about the nature and aims of Daugothoth are the Chosen of Mystra, powerful figures such as Elminster, Khelben, Laeral, and Alustriel. These archmages do not currently act or speak out against him because the magical experimentation and advances Daugothoth is making are precisely the sort of thing Mystra encourages so that magic continues to grow and evolve.

Daugothoth operates under no similar compunctions, however, and energetically seeks to slaughter any being who learns of his endeavors or who stumbles upon his lair. He has already slain no fewer than three bands of hired adventurers who were working for him in Waterdeep but whom he judged had begun to suspect too much about him. His spells allow him to speak with such underlings by means of projected human-seeming images and to spy upon them from afar. When doing so, Daugothoth customarily poses as some sort of deliberately mysterious renegade mage.

In such roles, this dracolich has begun to play an increasingly active part in the shadier businesses of the cities of Waterdeep, Baldur's Gate, Neverwinter, and Secomber. At first, he pursued the acquisition of spells, magical items, and substances that might serve as magical components, but this drew the attention of too many alarmed wizards and authorities (one of whom dubbed the unknown cause of the thefts "the Creeping Doom," a title Daugothoth gleefully adopted), so he has taken to cloaking his activities behind a web of often unwitting thieving bands and sharp-dealing "gray-market" merchants.

Once a great wyrm of considerable size with a distinctive gouge in his left flank (an old, nearly mortal wound), Daugothoth was transformed into a dracolich by the crazed Cult mage Huulukharn. He promptly slew the wizard and vanished from the knowledge and influence of the Cult. Today the Creeping Doom possesses all of the normal powers of a dracolich and a great black wyrm plus a tail sting that lashes out once per round for up to 36 feet at his normal THAC0 of 1 to slash for 2d6+12 points of damage or to stab for 4d4+12 points of damage. As his breath weapon, Daugothoth can choose to employ (once in every three rounds) any one of the following effects:

- The original breath weapon of his black dragon form: a stream of acid 5 feet wide and 60 feet long in a straight line, dealing 4d4+12 points of damage.
- A bolt of lightning akin to that of a blue dragon, but slightly less potent. This 5-foot-wide breath attack extends 70 feet and deals only 4d8+6 points of damage.
- A cone of fire 60 feet long, flaring from 5 to 30 feet wide at its furthest end and dealing 7d10+7 points of damage.
- A cone of frost 60 feet long, flaring from 5 to 30 feet wide at its furthest end and dealing 8d6+8 points of damage.
- A bone spray (a cone of whirling bone shards) 60 feet long, flaring from 5 feet wide to 20 feet at its furthest end and dealing 12d4 points of piercing and slashing damage. If Daugothoth so chooses, this attack can cause only half damage, but the bones then gather together to form skeletons, rising 6 rounds later as 1d4+4 undead human skeletons under the absolute control of the dracolich. If a "1" is rolled for the number of skeletons, that one skeleton is a giant skeleton (see "Skeleton, Giant" in the MONSTROUS MANUAL™ tome).
- An undeath gout that takes effect in a cone 40 feet long, flaring from 5 feet wide to 20 feet at its furthest end and affecting only dead creatures in this area. The gout animates dead creatures as zombies that rise in 1d3 rounds or skeletons that rise in 1d2 rounds. In either case the newly animated creatures are under Daugothoth's absolute command. Note that this breath weapon can transform partial skeletal remains (of any body parts) into crawling claws and make snakes or flying creatures of any sort into deathfangs (detailed in the *Ruins of Undermountain* boxed set on the Flying Fang monster sheet). Living creatures touched by an undeath gout are chilled for 1d10 points of damage and receive no saving throw against this effect (unlike most breath weapons).
- A banish undeath breath weapon that forms a cone 40 feet long, flaring from 5 feet wide to 20 feet at its furthest end and remaining effective for 1 round. All undead coming into contact with any part of it suffer 4d4 points of damage from contact with the breath weapon. In addition, undead creatures of 5 Hit Dice or fewer (such as ghosts, wights, shadows, ghouls, zombies, and skeletons) are instantly rendered into inanimate dead. Depending on their natures, this destroys them or leaves them as remains that could be raised to life or made into undead creatures again by subsequent magics. (Note that Daugothoth can readily cause hostile lesser undead to fall and then rise again—by use of his undeath gout—as undead under his command.) Undead creatures of 6-8 HD (wraiths, mummies, and spectres) are allowed a saving throw vs. breath weapon to escape the instant termination of their undeath, and more powerful undead cannot be stripped of their undeath by this breath weapon.

Daugothoth is known to be developing other breath weapon attacks. In particular, he is seeking to modify certain of his spells into this attack form. The full range and power of his spells far outstrip those of normal dracoliches or dragons of any sort, and they seem to be on a par with those of an archmage of 25th level. Rather than the normal spell roster for a black dragon and the once-per-day nature



Daurgothoth, "The Creeping Doom"

of dracolich magic, Daurgothoth now wields a roster of five memorized spells of each level that individually return to him 24 hours after being cast. To change a memorized spell, Daurgothoth must undertake study as a human mage does. He casts spells and makes *saving throws* as a 25th level wizard, retaining the 45% magic resistance he had as a living great black wyrm. He is also known to have modified his undead body to achieve immunity to the following spells: *imprisonment*; *power word, kill*; *reverse gravity*; *sink*; *temporal stasis*; and *time stop*.

Daurgothoth's host (see the Dracolich entry in the Magic and Monsters of the Cult chapter) is rumored to be a black opal of insignificant size hidden in a huge heap of gems of all types and sizes that nearly fills a cavern that also holds the skeletal bodies of six lesser dragons that could serve Daurgothoth as a succession of replacement bodies. This cave is walled away behind tumbled rock somewhere under the gem-filled cavern of Daurgothoth's main lair. The rock to be dug aside to reach it may well underlie the dracolich's bonepile itself.

Daurgothoth is a brilliant crafter of magic, an eternally inquisitive being, and a practiced observer with an impressive memory. He is governed by a wary paranoia that keeps him always on the lookout for lurking foes and possible attacks, and that makes him work constantly to better his personal powers and defenses. This is one wyrm who is never found with most or all of his spells exhausted. If he ever reaches such a state in the heat of protracted battle, he has been known to swiftly depart to hide away until his magic is again strong. He is patient in his dealings and calm

in battle; none can successfully goad him, and pride never leads him into overconfidence in battle or any stubborn refusal to retreat. For an immortal dracolich who takes care to safeguard himself from destruction, there is always another day for fighting—or for seeking revenge.

Daurgothoth is known to have a cruel sense of humor and to enjoy thinking ahead to anticipate his opponents' tactics in any struggle. He craves music and company from time to time, but he never lets these needs compromise the security of his lair. Beautiful lady bards who acquire mysterious lone male human audiences at their campfires in the North are warned that they could be entertaining simple travelers, lycanthropes, doppelgangers, Harpers—or the Creeping Doom. On a comforting note, Daurgothoth seldom injures or devours good singers.

Daurgothoth's Lair: The Creeping Doom lairs in the abandoned gnome city of Dolblunde north and east of Waterdeep. Known entrances to this subterranean labyrinth include the bandit tunnels in nearby Maiden's Tomb Tor, certain passages in the vast dungeon complex of Undermountain, and a flooded tunnel leading from the muddy bottom of the River Dessarin itself. This latter, largest route is the one most often used by Daurgothoth, though the dracolich does employ *teleport* spells on occasion.

Daurgothoth's spells have hollowed out many large caverns for his convenience, forming an ever-growing chain that is tunneling slowly northwest to a planned emergence in a shaft in the mountains north of Waterdeep. To discourage intruders, the undead wyrm has placed many traps in the smaller gnome-constructed passages surrounding the



great caverns of his lair. There are a few teeter-block pitfalls, but most of these perils are stone spikefall traps (sharpened stones on dangling chains that typically fall to inflict 5d4 points of damage on those they pierce).

These mechanical hazards are assisted by unswervingly loyal undead servitors: deathfangs and a new sort of monster created by the Creeping Doom—bone lurkers. These undead creatures appear as portcullises or gridwork curtains of interlaced human and beast bones. They function just as living lurkers do, except that their initial attack is a piercerlike fall from above to thrust into foes for 4d6 points of damage. After their first plummeting attacks, bone lurkers try to wrap themselves around foes as do living lurkers, dealing entangled opponents 3d4 points of piercing damage per round. They move by flying (as lurkers) and fight foes they have not enfolded by slapping them once per round for 1d6 points of damage.

Bone lurkers have a Morale of 20 and never retreat from foes except by Daurgothoth's command. They share all the usual spell immunities of undead creatures and also suffer only half damage from edged weapons as do skeletons. A bone lurker has an XP Value of 4,000—but some have been encountered that unleash one of the Creeping Doom's spells upon foes with such effects as paralyzation, weakness, magical fear, or blindness; these are thought to be magics cast into the lurkers and somehow held for passing on to living targets. These spell-holding bone lurkers are worth 5,000 XP.

Bone Lurker: AC 6; MV 1, Fl 9 (B); HD 10; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 4d6 (initial piercing thrust) or 3d4 (continuing entangled piercing damage) or 1d6 (unentangled slap); SA initial piercing thrust and continuing entanglement damage; SD 4 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls, unable to be turned, half damage from edged weapons, immune to *sleep*, *hold*, *charm*, paralyzation, poison, and mind-controlling magic; SZ H (20-foot diameter); ML 20; Int Non- (0); AL Neutral; XP 4,000 or 5,000.

Certain passages in Daurgothoth's lair also boast what can only be the wyrm's salvaged early attempts at creating a tail sting: great snakelike assemblies of bone that are fixed to the wall, ceiling, or floor at one end but can coil and lash out from that anchor point to slash or stab foes with a bone "sword spike" as long as some human males stand tall. This fearsome edged weapon pierces for 3d8 points of damage or slashes for 2d6 points of damage.

These bony "stingers" range in length from 70 feet to 30 feet (although they can retract into a compact stack as short as 20 feet). Although they are unintelligent constructs unaffected by spells designed to control the mind or deceive the senses, they seem able to sense all living beings within their reaches. They attack all such targets. Each stinger has 4 to 8 HD and an AC of 7. A stinger has one stab and one slash attack in a round at the THAC0 appropriate for its Hit Dice and is subject to spells that control undead or that influence bones. If a stinger is severed from its base or separated into its component parts, all of the parts' animation is lost. Shards from shattered stinger bones have no properties beyond that of any other dead bony material.

At the heart of Daurgothoth's chain of caverns is a side passage large enough for a dragon to fly down. It is guarded by a wall of monster skeletons (the remains of a tribe of mountain giants, still armed with their clubs) who have orders to attack all beings in the tunnel who are not Daurgothoth himself. Above them hangs a death tyrant with similar orders. (The surviving eyestalk powers of this undead beholder are unknown.)

Beyond these guardians, the tunnel leads to a closed stone door that is itself a stone golem that attacks anyone trying to open it and reflects all spells used against it 100% back at their source. The door opens into a vast, ravaged cavern almost half a mile in length, its walls scorched and scarred, and its floor heaped with broken stone. This is the dracolich's spellcasting chamber, where he experiments with magics.

A smaller tunnel leads off of one side of this cave, doubling back on itself several times, to reach the gem-filled cave where Daurgothoth sleeps and broods upon a huge pile of bones. Aside from the rumored secret walled-away chamber that holds his host, two lesser caverns are known to branch away from the main one: a treasure vault crammed with all manner of magic, statuettes, coins, and the like; and a storage room where the dragon keeps his spellbooks, the magical items he knows enough about to feel safe in using (just what these are remains a mystery), and a smooth-walled prison pit into which he drops living creatures he wants to keep for later. Much of the rest of this storage cavern is filled with a vast collection of odd substances that might serve as material components, including the pickled corpses of such large monsters as dragon turtles, purple worms, and remorhaz (and, of course, several sorts of dragons).

The prison pit is a smooth-walled shaft 30 feet across and 100 feet deep. The stone walls are fused into an almost glassy state by many applications of fiery breath and certain spells. The pit floor is damp sand. (Unknown to Daurgothoth, a *staff of the magi* is lost in it.) The dragon typically loops a rope around prisoners and tosses them down the shaft, securing the upper end of their pull-ropes under a lid consisting of a huge, four-ton slab of stone that covers the top of the shaft. Dangerous prisoners (such as spellcasting adventurers) are encased in a set of *iron bands of Bilarro* first; this sphere lies ready in a hollow beside the shaft.

In his main lair, Daurgothoth's massive bonepile affords him raw material for his bone-related attacks. He has the ability to teleport all unenchanted, nonundead bare bones within 40 feet into himself to breathe forth as necessary. (They fly at MV 6 (D) and cause no harm upon entering his skeletal form.) If away from his bonepile, he can transport bones from it over any distance on Toril to his innards to be used in his breath weapon attack.

Daurgothoth's Domain: From Dolblunde, Daurgothoth keeps watch over traffic on the High Road, the Long Road, and on the River Dessarin, as well as overland from the walls of Goldenfields, south along the west bank of the Dessarin to Zundbridge, and north from there along the coast roughly as far as Mount Sar. He lacks the time to spy much in Waterdeep but employs a modified long-range *wizard eye* spell for hours at a time to peer at things in the



City of Splendors when he is interested in something (when word is abroad in the city about a wizardly duel, for instance, or the Watchful Order is gathering to discuss something important). Daurgothoth's attention is caught by all things magical and news of dragons and their doings. He is not, however, interested in being identified and located by nosy priests or mages, and he seldom acts openly in his territory. One day, when his lair reaches to the surface somewhere in the mountains, he may fly forth each night to destroy any who dare to question his authority—once his traps are ready to deal with the archmages who will inevitably try to destroy him. Soon, perhaps . . .

In the meantime, Daurgothoth prefers to employ various unscrupulous minor wizards (including, notably, several Zhentarim magelings who fled the fall of Zhentil Keep) and adventuring bands. He keeps these forces believing they are working for a Waterdhavian noble who uses magic to conceal his identity, and he tries to keep each group of his agents ignorant of the existence of the others. Sometimes he tests their loyalty and mettle by sending various agents after the same thing to see who prevails, how, and what they report to him about it. These agents serve to seize various magical items, spells, and substances that could serve Daurgothoth in spellcasting.

Daurgothoth often employs such aliases as “the Masked Master” or “Onalibar” when dealing with his underlings. (The latter name is a private joke: It once belonged to a Cult of the Dragon mage who tried to enslave the dracolich soon after his initial rebellion—and who was promptly eaten for his pains.) He rewards the wizard agents with useful spells from his collection, steering them into stealing or developing other magics for him in return.

The Deeds of Daurgothoth: Freed of the need to hunt or consume any sort of food, Daurgothoth can pursue ever-greater magical achievements more or less constantly. He tries to hide from other dracoliches and living dragons as much as possible, as well as from the annoyingly energetic members of the Cult of the Dragon. He has decided that if the Cult proves to be too much of an annoyance, he will attempt to take over its leadership (concealing his true nature) and put it to work for him in his quest for the finding or making of a perfect mate.

Daurgothoth is especially wary of, and yet fascinated by, amethyst dragons and faerie dragons. He judges that their skills make them unpredictable and therefore dangerous, yet he also considers them possible sources for something that could be bred or modified into his mate. He is also interested in fire lizards and firedrakes as possible raw material for breeding stock, so he follows news of their movements.

Studying the activities of the Cult of the Dragon and of wizards in general, while keeping well away from strongly organized groupings of mages such as the Red Wizards of Thay or the archwizards of Halruaa, makes up much of his daily work. He is always considering schemes to improve the powers of any underlings or constructed servitor creatures so that they can snatch newly developed magics from such sources undetected—or at least in such a way that they cannot reliably be followed. Often he ponders how he might mind-control a scholar of Candlekeep well enough to learn things mind-to-mind and direct what books the

individual read while at the same time eluding the efforts of anyone searching for such a mind-link (which those in power in Candlekeep do regularly, as such infiltrations have been attempted often in the recent past).

Daurgothoth's current activities include trying to infiltrate temples of Lathander to gain magic related to the creation of life (for his own breeding plans) and personally trying to develop a breath weapon that acts as a *Mordenkainen's disjunction* on everyone's magic but his. Thus far, he can breathe out a *dispel magic* conical effect, but he resists using it in battle because it tends to spin wild magic away from its verges, sometimes doing him more harm than good.

Daurgothoth's Magic: The Creeping Doom commands almost as wide an array of personally modified spells as do the Seven Sisters or such mighty mages as Elminster and Khelben Arunsun. One deadly personal magic deserves mention because it is so spectacular:

Bonemelt (Wiz 8; Necromancy)

Range:	10 yards+10 yards/level
Components:	V
Duration:	1 day/level
Casting Time:	8
Area of Effect:	One creature
Saving Throw:	Special

This spell transforms the bones of a living mammalian creature who fails a saving throw vs. spell to jelly, causing the victim to collapse at the end of the next round into a helpless, amoebalike slithering blob. Breathing and movement (by creeping, at MV 3) are possible, but climbing, flying, wielding items, and the like become impossible. Death does not automatically directly occur from this alteration, but it often results from failure of the system shock roll required when the “boneless” state takes effect or the lack of swift mobility the spell causes. Daurgothoth can reverse the bonemelt at will (usually so that the victim can be slain and then made into a servitor undead), but it otherwise lasts for 25 days when he casts it. Boneless creatures do not need to eat, sleep, drink, or breathe, but they suffer 4d4 points of damage per day if subjected to full sunlight for more than seven continuous hours. When a *bonemelt* spell ends, either due to its duration expiring or Daurgothoth so willing it, affected victims need not make another system shock roll to once again see if they survive; they automatically do so.

If a target of this spell succeeds at a saving throw vs. spell, only one limb is affected. (Determine such affected limbs randomly between arms and legs; heads and tails—if any—are not targeted by the magic.) Failure at this saving throw means that the victim becomes boneless as described above.

A boneless limb turns into a dangling, jellylike mass lacking the strength to hold or carry things. If the limb is normally used for locomotion, the creature's movement rate drops by three-quarters (round up),



and spellcasting or activities requiring careful balance or deft manipulations typically become impossible. Worn or held items may or may not be dropped, depending on the situation and the actions of the victim. If the limb is normally used in the somatic gestures of spellcasting, a spell requiring its use has its casting time increased by 3 if it normally takes less than a round to cast, or by a round if it normally takes a round or more to cast. Certain spells may prove impossible to cast, at the DM's discretion.

A full day after the spell affects boneless creatures (24 hours), they are allowed a system shock roll at a -25% penalty. If the roll succeeds, the victim returns to his or her normal form at the end of 1 turn. Victims who fail this roll must wait until the spell expires or is ended by Daurgothoth to return to normal.

Though this spell is usable by dragons alone and is in fact unique to Daurgothoth, its casting time reflects the fact that Daurgothoth casts spells as a human wizard with levels rather than as an innate ability of his dragon form.

Daurgothoth's Fate: The Creeping Doom is so ambitious that his schemes seem destined to failure. Even Daurgothoth himself is aware that spawning a race of descendants having powers akin to his own could well bring on his own eventual doom at their hands. Still, even if he never mates, his continual growth in power is a matter of grave concern for folk all over Faerûn, both draconic and human.

This dracolich will stop at nothing, and Mystra seems content to let him build himself into the greatest creature of magic in all Toril if he can achieve this aim. At the same time, his lonely search for a mate opens him up to attack from wily foes, and if his seizures of magic grow more successful, he will soon have no shortage of those foes.

Dretchroyaster, "The Monarch Reborn"

Dretchroyaster (DRETCH-ro-YAZ-ter), more commonly known as "Dretch," was a venerable green dragon prior to his recent transformation into a dracolich in the Year of the Sword (1365 DR). Dretchroyaster now styles himself "the Monarch Reborn," which reflects his transformation and ambitions for supremacy in the region as much as it does his mad attempts to transform himself into a spelljammer. (See below for more details on the latter.)

Well known throughout the southern Dales for his periodic rampages inflicting widespread destruction, Dretchroyaster is a fell hunter of all forms of life who is known for his merciless manner, unquenchable greed, and masterful cunning. Less appreciated is Dretch's physical cowardice (although he fights if cornered) and his desperation to avoid death at any cost. As Dretchroyaster has yet to be challenged by a worthy foe, he does not yet exhibit the fearless morale common to most dracoliches.

Dretchroyaster prefers to initiate combat with any foe with a series of feints and diversions designed to expose his opponents' weaknesses. The dracolich has a masterful grasp of tactics and terrain, and, if possible, he always pre-

pares a wide variety of traps and foils designed to weaken and distract his foes. In every lair he has ever claimed, Dretch has passed the years creating an ever-widening ring of snares, pitfalls, and magical traps so as to be prepared for the incursions of unexpected interlopers.

Like most green dragons of Cormanthor, Dretchroyaster has a great fondness for the flesh of centaurs, and he hunts them at any opportunity, even now that he has been transformed. Elves are an incredible delicacy to be savored for months, but the Fair Folk are few and far between. As a result, when the green dracolich needs to replenish his breath weapon, he usually dines on the humans and horses who make up standard caravan fare. For variety, and to satisfy his depraved sense of humor, Dretch enjoys dining on still-living treants—when he can get them. Aside from his suspect nerve, Dretchroyaster's major weakness in years past has been his tendency to let his guard drop when dining. Given his declining appreciation of once-favored foods after his transformation and as a result of several near-fatal experiences, the dracolich is now warier when consuming prey and seems unlikely to let his guard down in this fashion again.

Dretchroyaster's transformation into a dracolich is a familiar tale of slow seduction and manipulation on the part of the Keepers of the Secret Hoard. The green wyrm had long been courted by the Cult of the Dragon, but not until after two close brushes with death at the hands of adventurers did he even consider the Cult's entreaties. The first incident occurred in the Year of the Snarling Dragon (1279 DR) after Dretch awoke from a century-long sleep and emerged from his concealed lair to terrorize the region. Several normally independent adventuring companies, who came to call themselves collectively the Crossed Swords, were commissioned to dispatch the wyrm. Dretchroyaster was grievously wounded, but he managed to make his escape. The Crossed Swords were unable to find the dragon's lair, so well was it concealed.

The second incident occurred fairly recently in the summer of the Year of the Crown (1351 DR). The Merry Marauders crossed paths with Dretchroyaster in the elven woods south of Myth Drannor while the wyrm was feeding on a trio of centaurs of the Cloven Hoof tribe it had just slain. The adventuring band attacked the incautious wyrm and wounded him severely, but again Dretchroyaster just barely managed to escape. The Merry Marauders were unable to locate the wyrm's lair, but they did find one of the narrow ventilation tunnels Dretch had dug to improve the air circulation in his home. The band's wizards cast several *cloudkill* and *incendiary cloud* spells down the hole, further injuring the wyrm.

Unbeknownst to the green dragon or even themselves, the Merry Marauders had been secretly hired by Larkonlan, a high-ranking wizard in the Sembian Cult cell, as the opening gambit of the mage's campaign to convince Dretchroyaster to become a dracolich or to drive him from the region. Shortly after Dretch's second near-death experience, Larkonlan and his allies approached the wyrm with a magnificent offering for his hoard and tendered their offers of dracolichdom. At that time, the wizard mentioned that if the venerable green dragon was considering moving his lair, the Cult had found a perfect new location for him to consider.



Two years earlier, the Company of the Sparrow Hawk, a band of mercenaries recruited by the Sembian Cult cell, had stumbled across a unique site in the elven woods while returning from an unsuccessful foray into Myth Drannor. A gargantuan plant resembling a large crystalline web had overrun a woodland glade, creating a natural mazelike lair. While there was evidence that elves had visited the site previously, divination spells determined that none of the Fair Folk had trod amidst the crystal webworks for at least two score years and, with the Retreat to Evermeet well underway, it seemed unlikely that any remaining elves could manage more than a token opposition to a newly resident dragon. As he had already been considering moving to a new residence, Dretchroyaster took advantage of the Cult's discovery and shifted his lair to Monarch's Fall Glade, as it is known to the elves, in the Year of the Dragon (1352 DR). (On a side note, part of the Larkonlan's motivation in inducing Dretchroyaster to move seems to have had to do with the fact that plans to install another Sacred One in Aencar's Manor in Battledale were already well underway, and the two lairs would have been too close together to avoid friction between the Sacred Ones.)

For more than a decade, Larkonlan and his fellow Cultists visited Dretchroyaster in his new lair, always offering new gifts for the dragon's hoard and subtly playing on Dretch's unspoken, but quite evident, fear of adventurers. After 13 years of such courtship, Dretchroyaster agreed to undergo the transformation, but only after insisting on the construction of a host certain to increase his chances of surviving if his physical form was ever slain. (See below for details on *Dragonslair*, Dretchroyaster's unique host.)

Dretchroyaster's Lair: Dretch lairs in a tangled glen east of ruined Myth Drannor and south of Hillsfar known as Monarch's Fall Glade. The glade is named for one of the more unusual battles that was fought between the Army of Darkness and the defenders of Myth Drannor during the course of the Weeping War that eventually led to the fall of the City of Song.

On the 25th day of Hammer in the Year of the Firedrake (713 DR), during one of the many battles that composed the Weeping War, an elven man-o-war crashed into the trees atop part of the Army of Darkness that was invading Cormanthyr. The spelljammer had been dispatched by the Elven Imperial Fleet of Realmspace in response to a magical plea from a grounded ally among Cormanthyr's wizards. In the First and Second Greenwing Wars, the man-o-war had been an important component of the Dawn Fronts Campaign and helped changed the tide of the war in the northern forest in the elves' favor. In the third engagement in which the *Monarch Mordent* participated, however, Captain Oncith Ilbenalu's pride overcame his sense, and he maneuvered too close to the treetops. Gaulguth the nycaloth flew skyward and sheered off one of the ship's wings at its base with his great axe *Heartcleaver*. The helmsman died immediately as a result of the magical shock, and the ship and all hands on board were lost in the subsequent crash.

In the centuries following the Third Greenwing War, the man-o-war's photosynthetic wings continued to grow, and large crystalline webworks wrapped around the clearings and trees in the immediate vicinity of the crash site. Largely

avoided by animals, the amber-and-emerald crystal webs and walls apparently were used by the elves as a redoubt and shelter in the latter half of the Weeping War and were probably used intermittently thereafter in a similar fashion.

Since taking up residence amidst the wildly overgrown remains of the *Monarch Mordent*, Dretchroyaster has spent endless hours shaping and modifying his lair. As of the Year of the Tankard (1370 DR), Monarch's Fall Glade has been transformed into a three-dimensional labyrinth of vegetation. Twisty little passages snarl throughout the multi-dimensional maze; their walls and floors are composed of tightly woven brambles and briars sporting countless thorns. Many of the passageways are too small for Dretch to navigate unless he employs a *reduce* spell (the reverse form of the 1st-level wizard spell *enlarge*), but others are large enough so that the wyrm can squeeze his ponderous bulk through.

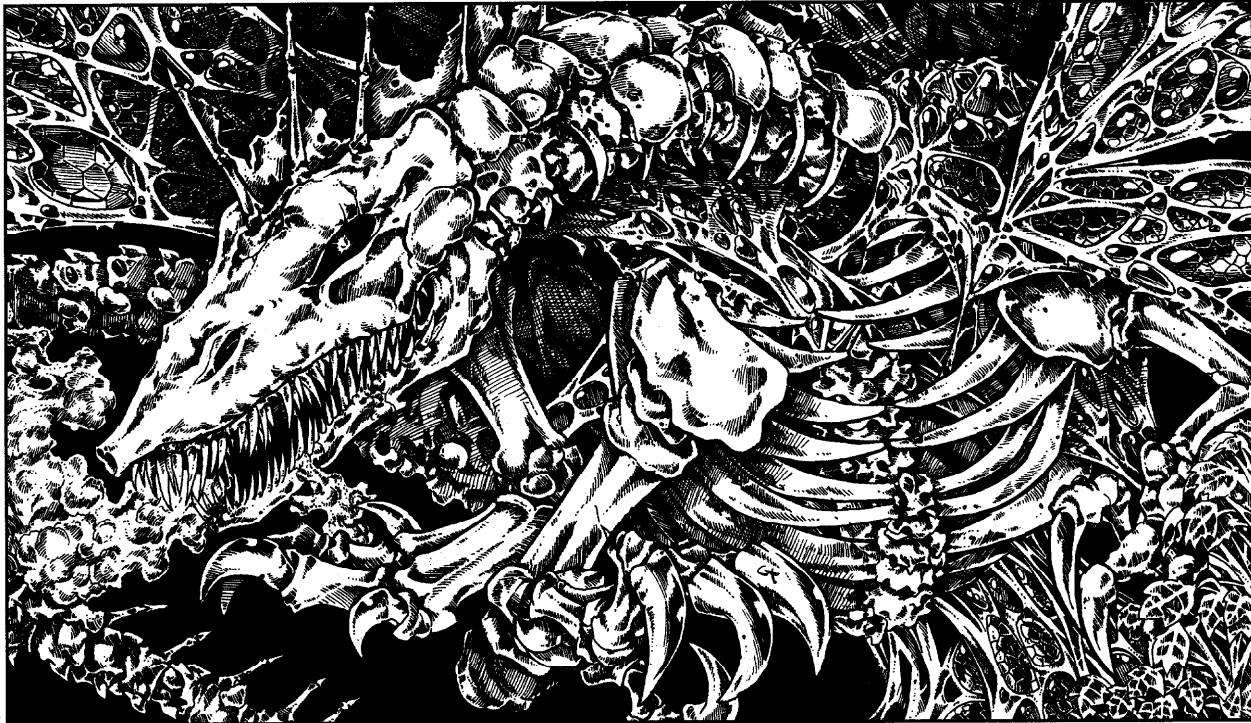
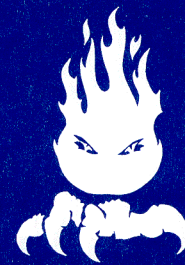
The crystalline walls and overgrown brambles and briars of Dretchroyaster's lair block most, but not all, of the light that makes it through the forest canopy, lending a lambent green hue to all illumination similar to that seen by peering through a large emerald or still-sodden seaweed. The walls of vegetation are thick enough to support a great deal of weight (up to and including the dracolich himself), but the sharp thorns inflict 1d6 points of damage per round to unprotected flesh (except Dretchroyaster's).

Vapors take a long time to disperse when trapped inside the tunnels of the plant labyrinth. Thus, spells such as *stinking cloud* and *cloudkill* persist for twice their normal duration when cast within the confines of Monarch's Fall Glade, and counterspells such as *gust of wind* are typically ineffective. When Dretch employs his breath weapon within the maze of vegetation, it persists for a second round doing similar damage as the first round he breathed to anyone remaining in the targeted area. (Those who successfully saved vs. breath weapon in the first round, however, take at most half damage—or quarter damage if they make a second successful saving throw.) The Monarch Reborn has carefully crafted countless tiny passages between adjoining tunnels that enable him to employ his breath weapon and other spells so as to attack interlopers without exposing himself to their attacks.

Some magical effect, possibly a remnant of the enchantments that protected the *Monarch Mordent*, makes all living vegetation within Monarch's Fall Glade immune to fire. Open flames and spells such as *fireball* inflict normal damage on creatures within their area of effect, but the surrounding vegetation is as fire resistant as stone.

Dretchroyaster's old residence is located southwest of Essembra in a network of natural caverns. Ancient tunnels connect the now-abandoned lair with the cellars of Llundlar's Manse, one of the Ghost Holds along Rauthauvyr's Road. Unbeknownst to the Cult, the Monarch Reborn has returned to his previous home on more than one occasion, as it is well-situated near a network of *gates* through which the Monarch Reborn can quickly travel to the distant reaches of Faerûn.

Dretchroyaster's Domain: Dretchroyaster's recently established and slowly expanding domain stretches across much of the northern reaches of the elven woods. The venerable green dracolich claims the triangular region extend-



Dretchroyaster, The Monarch Reborn

ing from Yúlash to the Standing Stone to Elvtree. While no part of Dretchroyaster's demesne is free from challenge by other wyrms, living or undead, the green dracolich's claims ring particularly hollow in both the vicinity of the Elven Court and Myth Drannor and its environs.

Few creatures living in or passing through Dretchroyaster's demesne are aware of the newly resident draconic overlord. As the great dracolich settles into his surroundings, however, such ignorance is sure to fade. Dretchroyaster has agreed to allow merchant caravans under the protection of his Cult allies to pass in exchange for sizable tithes to his hoard, but all other passersby he considers to be unsolicited offerings from the teeming cities of mammals that are intended to sate his all-consuming greed.

The Deeds of Dretchroyaster: Among humankind, Dretchroyaster is perhaps best remembered for the destruction he wrought throughout Battledale, Tasseldale, and Featherdale in the Year of the Snarling Dragon (1279 DR). Over 700 Dalesfolk lost their lives in the two-month rampage, and more than a half-dozen villages were transformed into poisonous wastelands as a result of the wyrm's ruinous crusade. The events of this dark time are recounted in a sad ballad still sung today in the southern Dales entitled "The Clouds Came Rolling In."

Amongst the elves, the green wyrm is best known for an aerial duel he fought above Lake Sember with the then-very-old female black dragon, Naxorlytaalsxar, the Terror Tenebrous, in the Year of Watery Graves (1091 DR). Showers of acid and poisonous clouds of gas from the conflict, later named the Battle of Falling Fishkill, befouled the

fresh-water lake and the surrounding shoreline for years thereafter. The small clans of Alu'Tel'Quessir (aquatic elves) who lived beneath the surface of the lake were devastated by the lingering contaminants, and many were forced to return to their ancestral waters in the Sea of Fallen Stars. Only the tireless efforts of Semberholme's resident druids and high mages restored Lake Sember to its original purity a decade later.

Before his transformation, Dretchroyaster regarded the venerable female green dragon Verthandantalyx, the Verdant Cloud, as his mate, but it has been nearly two decades since he last contacted her, and she and her latest brood may very well have been slain by adventurers. ("Little Verthie," as Verthandantalyx is more commonly known to Dretch, is believed to lair approximately 80 miles due west of Myth Drannor near the villages of Trenahess and Caronal along the banks of the River Ashaba. Like her mother and her mother's clan a thousand years before her, Little Verthie is venerated by the local humans as a god. She is described in *The Draconomicon*.) Unlike many younger greens, Dretchroyaster and Verthandantalyx had mated on more than one occasion, and, equally atypically, Dretchroyaster had always left Verthandantalyx to raise their offspring.

Since his transformation, the Monarch Reborn has become obsessed with the remains of the elven spelljammer that constitutes much of his new lair. Dretch has invested a great deal of time and energy into unlocking the secrets of spelljamming in pursuit of a mad obsession. As a result of his research, the dracolich has managed to graft bits of the emerald-hued crystalline plant that once comprised the



Monarch Mordent onto his partially skeletal body. Eventually, Dretchroyaster plans to cover his entire skeletal frame with the ever-growing plant and transform his physical body into a spelljamming vessel capable of exploring the heavens. Toward that end, the Monarch Reborn continues to search for the lost spelljamming *helm* that once propelled the elven man-o-war.

Dretchroyaster's Magic: The Monarch Reborn employs a growing number of unusual and rare magical items and spells. Elven observers have determined that Dretchroyaster has access to at least two rare spells created by his ancestor the legendary Venominhandar— *Venom's brambletangle* and *Venom's thicketgrowth*— and the Monarch Reborn is thought to possess several spell tomes that once belonged to the legendary green wyrm of the Tangled Vale. Dretchroyaster is also thought to have found the lorebook of the captain's chest of the *Monarch Mordent*, as he has employed a closely guarded spell of the Elven Imperial Fleet, *train vegetation*, to modify his new lair extensively. Though he is not a dragon mage, apparently he has been able to consciously select which spells he would develop as his dragon spell-like ability spells (which he can cast once a day and automatically regains the next day, and for which he has a casting time of 1 and only a verbal spell component) and has been able to use particular spell tomes, some of which through unknown means he has learned to read, as references to pick several of them from. Indeed, it is possible that he may be able to choose his spells for a particular day from a roster of spells in excess of the four 1st-level spells and three 2nd-level spells his age would normally limit him to, though he cannot cast more than that number of spells per day. However, he does not study spells from a spellbook like a normal mage, so the manner by which he does this may be in some way akin to a magical fusion of draconic mental abilities with the less well-known science of psionics.

In addition to his diverse spell selection, Dretchroyaster has been amassing magical items for his hoard and to safeguard his lair. Of particular note, the Monarch Reborn acquired several items of ancient elven make over the course of several forays to the Lost Trench, site of a legendary battle of the Weeping War. Amidst the bones of the Army of Darkness, Dretch recovered such relics as the *diamond staff of Chomylla*, *Azler's harp*, and a *helping hand*. (Both *Azler's harp* and *helping hands* are described in the *ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA™* tomes. The green dracolich has become sufficiently practiced employing the *helping hand* that he can evoke the powers of *Azler's harp* remotely. This ability has enabled him to escape some of the magical bindings the Cult enacted during his transformation into a dracolich.) The most important item of magic in the Monarch Reborn's hoard, by far, is *Dragonslair*, a magical long sword whose gemstone pommel serves as the dracolich's host.

Diamond Staff of Chomylla

The *diamond staff of Chomylla* is one of at least three long-lost *lorestaffs* of *Uvarean*. The *diamond staff* was created by its namesake centuries before the destruction of the Lorelands (as the elven realm of *Uvarean* in the

west central forest was known) by a falling star over 6,000 years ago. *Chomylla* was one of the few *Uvareanni* to escape the catastrophe thanks to her fortuitous visit to the court of *Jhyrennstar* on behalf of the last Coronal of *Uvarean*, Lady *Mnuvae*, days before the Twelve Nights of Fire. In the wake of the conflagration, *Chomylla* bequeathed her *diamond staff* to the Fourth Coronal of *Jhyrennstar* for safekeeping before she returned to her homeland to see what, if anything, could be saved from *Uvarean's* libraries. The high mage was never heard from again, and her *diamond staff* vanished mysteriously from the vaults of *Jhyrennstar* shortly thereafter. Although the *diamond staff* was reportedly in the possession of an orc of the Army of Darkness in the northern woods above *Oloriil* for a short while, it never resurfaced after the Weeping War concluded. The legendary *lorestaff* was not recovered until the (appropriately named) Year of the Staff (1366 DR), when Dretchroyaster uncovered it in the Lost Trench amidst the remains of the fallen.

The *diamond staff of Chomylla* is nearly 6 feet in length, gradually tapers toward the base, and is cut from a magically elongated diamond. Six rectangular facets run the length of the quarterstaff, each inscribed with nearly invisible runes written in a long-forgotten ancient elven racial script. The top and bottom of the staff are each capped by six sharply tapering triangular facets that come together at pointed tips.

Anyone in physical contact with the *diamond staff of Chomylla* may *detect magic* by silent act of will. In addition, the bearer of the *diamond staff* may cast *identify*, *legend lore*, and *tongues* three times each per day. If used in combat, the glassteed *diamond staff* is as light as a pine stave of similar shape but as strong as adamantite, and it serves as a *quarterstaff+3* in the hands of a proficient wielder. Once per day, the bearer of the *diamond staff* may cause its touch (requiring a successful attack roll) to flood the target's mind with a torrent of information (treat as the effects of a *maze* spell). The *diamond staff* makes its item saving throws as metal, and it is immune to spells such as *shatter*.

The primary function of the *diamond staff of Chomylla*, which is unknown to either Dretchroyaster or the Cult of the Dragon, is to unlock the secrets of the libraries of *Uvarean*. While many of these ancient lorehouses are no more, some few do survive, albeit usually in a damaged state, in the environs of *Mistledale*. To keep the secrets of the ancient elves, *Uvarean's* lore was encrypted in countless artifacts of that realm. Examples include chimes keyed to play multiple elven melodies whose overlay reveals unexpected lore, stone murals of elaborate scenes in which miniature runes are inscribed, crystal spindles carved to reveal pictographs within that vary with the ambient light, etc. In the immediate presence of relics housing *Uvarean's* lore, a faint tingling is perceived by the bearer of the *diamond staff*, even if she or he is unaware of hidden lore secreted in a nearby object. If the bearer of the *diamond staff* concentrates on a



specific bit of lore and makes a successful Intelligence ability check, she or he gains a partial understanding of what is meant by the information contained in an encrypted item. To truly understand the knowledge hidden within the unorthodox libraries of the Lorelands, of course, requires an elven lifetime of study.

Dragonslair

Dragonslair, pronounced “Dragonslayer,” is a *long sword* +2, *green dragon slayer* that was enspelled by Larkonlan, a wizard of the Cult of the Dragon, in the Year of the Sword (1365 DR). The magical blade’s pommel is inset with a *rogue stone* that serves as the host of the green dracolich Dretchroyaster. When agreeing to undergo the transformation into a dracolich, Dretchroyaster insisted on the design of this very unique host in order to maximize his opportunity to acquire a new body if he were ever slain. (*Rogue stones* are described in *Volo’s Guide to All Things Magical*.)

Dragonslair was crafted from the finest mithral by a duergar master smith. Its gleaming, straight blade is treated with *everbright*, enchanted so as to always retain an enduring, bright shine. This treatment prevents any rusting, tarnishing, discoloration, or corrosion. (*Everbright* is described in *Volo’s Guide to All Things Magical*.) The mithral hilt is carved to resemble a dragon wrapped in a tight spiral by its own tail (which acts as a grip). If examined by someone well versed in dragon lore, the hilt carving can be identified as a stylized depiction of a green dragon. The jaws of the dragon stretch impossibly wide to form the hand-guard, and an etching of a billowing cloud of gas issuing from the dragon’s mouth is carved into the blade itself. Embedded in the pommel nut is a small, shifting, rainbow-colored, iridescent gemstone. Its fluid shades of color appear almost liquid under normal sunlight. When the dracolich’s spirit inhabits the *rogue stone*, the gem glows with a dim green light.

Close examination of the blade reveals a pattern of runes inscribed in the vaporous cloud on both sides of the blade. The runes are written in Auld Wyrnish and spell out “Dragonslair.” A permanent variant of a *confuse languages* spell has been cast on the runes ensuring that anyone attempting to read the runes using magic (such as a *comprehend languages* spell or a *helm of comprehending languages and reading magic*) is 95% likely to mistranslate the runes as “Dragonslayer,” as is any rogue using his or her *read languages* ability. A *dispel magic* spell cast on the sword temporarily removes this *confuse languages* effect for 1d4 rounds.

The sword has all of the powers of a *long sword* +2, *green dragon slayer*. The blade has a +4 attack and damage bonus against any sort of true dragon. It inflicts triple damage against green dragons (3d12+4), but it is considered a bonusless magical weapon when used against any sort of dracolich and does not inflict triple damage against green dracoliches. Twelve *gemjump* spells (detailed in *Pages from the Mages*) have been cast

upon the glassteed *rogue stone* embedded in the pommel, at least seven cast by powerful Cult mages and the rest by previous owners of the gem (unknown to the Cult of the Dragon). (Some of the prior owners may survive today as liches, vampire archmages, or worse.) The *rogue stone* facilitates retrieval of the blade by Cult mages, if ever necessary, assuming it is not encased in an *anti-magic shell* or left in a dead magic region. Normally the blade is a nonaligned, nonintelligent weapon.

When Dretchroyaster’s spirit is contained within the *rogue stone* (in other words, the body of the dracolich is slain, but not the spirit), the sword gains several additional powers. It becomes an intelligent weapon (alignment LE, Intelligence 12, Ego 21, Personality 33) that speaks the language of green dragons, Auld Wyrnish, and the common tongue of humanity in addition to being telepathic. It radiates a permanent *undetectable alignment* spell (reverse of *know alignment*) that cannot be dispelled.

Dragonslair has several additional powers as well when the dracolich’s spirit occupies the host. The bearer of the sword is immune to all harmful gasses, can cast *water breathing* at will, can cast *warp wood* three times a day, *plant growth* once a day, and *entangle* once a day. In addition, Dretchroyaster’s spirit can cast *suggestion* once a day on only the swordbearer, and he can detect the location and distance of the nearest green dragon(s) on the current plane, if any, at will. All spells cast by the sword and Dretchroyaster’s spirit in this form are at the 18th level of spell use.

In life and undeath, Dretchroyaster is a cruel and ruthless plotter known for his greed and penchant for binges of wanton destruction. While his spirit inhabits his host blade, Dretchroyaster imbues the sword with the same personality. The green dracolich uses his suggestion power and ability to dominate weak personalities to direct any foolish or wounded swordbearer in the direction of the nearest green dragon in order to confront and kill the dracolich’s “host apparent.” If slain and imprisoned within its host, the dracolich spirit goes to any lengths to recover its original form, first by seizing the corpse of a (preferably green) dragon as a proto-dracolich and then devouring its original body to become a dracolich again. The dracolich enjoys riddles, and readily admits (verbally) that it is an enchanted blade created to serve as a “dragonslayer” (actually a pun on the phrase “dragon’s lair,” which is what he really says), specializing in killing green dragons. (This is not a falsehood.) Dretchroyaster reveals the sword’s powers only as he wishes.

Venom’s Brambletangle (Wiz 1; Alteration)

Range:	30 yards
Components:	V
Duration:	Permanent
Casting Time:	1
Area of Effect:	90 cubic feet
Saving Throw:	None



This dragon-only spell has been used to great effect by the progeny of Venominhandar and his mate since their deaths prior the erection of the Standing Stone. By means of this spell, the spellcaster transforms a region of briars and/or brambles into a densely tangled and thorny coppice through which movement is nearly impossible. Within the area of effect of *Venom's Brambletangle*, creatures of large or greater size cannot pass without suffering 1d8 points of damage per round or move at a rate greater than MR 1 (or 10 yards per round, if distance is calculated in more easily in that fashion in a particular instance) without some form of magical protection or facilitation.

Man-sized and small creatures cannot move at a rate greater than MR 1 (or 10 yards per round, if distance is calculated in more easily in that fashion in a particular instance) without taking damage unless using some form of magical protection or facilitation. Such creatures can choose to move at a rate of up to half their normal movement rate, but they suffer 1d6 points of damage per round if they do so.

Tiny creatures can move at a rate of up to half their normal movement rate without taking any damage if they use some form of magical protection or facilitation. If they choose to move at their normal movement rate, however, they take 1d4 points of damage per round.

Train Vegetation (Wiz 2; Alteration)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M (V for Dretch)
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 1 hour (1 for Dretch)
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

Developed long ago by wizards of the Elven Imperial Fleet of Wildspace to enable rapid and skillful repairs of elven spelljamming vessels, this spell enables the spellcaster to sculpt and train living plants, such as (but not limited to) those from which elven man-o-wars and other spelljammers are grown.

When cast, *train vegetation* enables the spellcaster to train, prune, cultivate, and otherwise sculpt up to 100 cubic yards (in other words, one ton of displacement in spelljammer parlance) of plant life. Application of this spell does not enable the spellcaster to radically alter the current state of plants within the area of effect. Branches may be lengthened, shortened, bent, twisted, thinned, and/or thickened, but no change may alter the vegetation's original state by more than 10% of the original value. For example, a 10-inch tall seedling could be increased in height to at most 11 inches whereas a 10-foot tall sapling could be increased to at most 11 feet in height. When applied to an elven spelljammer, this spell enables the caster to repair one hull point of damage per application.

Alternatively, this spell can be used to graft a single plant to another plant's root or to bind a single plant's root to a foreign substance such as rock, bone, or the like.

The material components of this spell are a twig with a green leaf still attached, an acorn, and powdered green gemstones of at least 500 gp in value.

Venom's Thicketgrowth (Wiz 2; Alteration)

Range: 30 yards
Components: V
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: 90 cubic feet
Saving Throw: None

Often used in conjunction with *Venom's Brambletangle*, *Venom's Thicketgrowth* is favored by several of Cormanthor's green dragons as a means of constructing extensive lairs amidst the forest's vegetation. It is a dragon-only spell.

By means of this spell, the spellcaster causes the dominant vegetation within a 90-cubic-foot region to spread to an adjacent region of similar volume. While preexisting vegetation is not directly killed by means of this spell, the propagated species typically overwhelms its competitors within a year of this spell's casting.

If cast repeatedly, this spell enables the propagation of a single species over an extensive region. It is said that Venominhandar and his mate employed this spell in conjunction with *Venom's Brambletangle* to transform the Emerald Vale into the Tangled Vale.

Dretchroyaster's Fate: Dretchroyaster is still growing comfortable amidst his new surroundings and with his recent transformation. As a result, he will most likely continue to exhibit a degree of tentativeness in his actions over the next century or so. With the exodus of most of Cormanthor's elven inhabitants in the Retreat to Evermeet, however, the green dracolich has, in effect, established his new domain in unclaimed lands, and thus he seems likely to grow dramatically in power in the coming years. In many ways, Dretch's greatest short-term challenge is to avoid arousing the ire (and hired blades) of Maalthiir, First Lord of Hillsfar, or the merchants of Sembia by disrupting trade along the Moonsea Ride overmuch.

Dretchroyaster's spelljamming ambitions seem likely to succeed if he can obtain a *helm* as a means of propulsion and determine how to make his own undead body the ship. Dretch has searched most of the area surrounding his lair for the *major helm* lost in the crash of the *Monarch Mordent*, so far without success. If and when the Monarch Reborn acquires a *helm*, he is sure to redouble his efforts to explore the heavens above. In the meantime, he continues his search for tomes of lore and magical items that will assist him in his mad quest.



Known Cult Dragons and Dracoliches

Below is a listing of all the known dragons and dracoliches that are or were affiliated with the Cult of the Dragon. (Game-specific details of these creatures are left to DMs to determine.) Two points must be made concerning this information. First, this list is not meant to be all-inclusive. Other dracoliches certainly may exist and more dragons could side with the Cult or undergo the transformation process at any time. Second, all the creatures listed here are given some geographic references. DMs should feel free to change or ignore those references if they choose.

Alasklerbanbastos (Blue Dracolich): This great blue wyrm contested with the great red wyrm Tchazzar for control of western Unther (now Chessenta) in the decades before and after the Year of Flashing Eyes (929 DR). After the apparent ascension to godhood of Tchazzar, thereafter known as the Father of Chessenta, in the Year of the Dracorage (1018 DR), Alasklerbanbastos turned to the nascent Cult of the Dragon cell in Mourktar in a desperate bid for additional power and underwent the transformation ritual to become a dracolich shortly thereafter. By the Year of Lathander's Light (1024 DR), the Cult cell in Unther had effectively disintegrated in the face of repeated attacks by the well-established followers of Tiamat (a harbinger of the internecine strife which would eventually consume the two sects), and Alasklerbanbastos had retreated into perpetual somnolence beneath Dragonback Mountain, the northernmost peak of the Riders in the Sky range.

Except for isolated forays (such as the summer-long reign of terror inflicted on the region in the Year of the Lurking Death (1322 DR)), the presence of the Great Bone Wyrm, as Alasklerbanbastos had come to be known, was largely ignored in Chessenta and Unther until the Year of the Sword (1365), seven years after Tchazzar's death. It has since become apparent that Alasklerbanbastos has rebuilt the Cult cell in Unther and attracted a coterie of young chromatic dragons to its banner in recent years, and the Great Bone Wyrm and his agents now control all lands north of the River of Metals and the Jade River (which flows westward from the Riders to the Sky mountains to the Bay of Chessenta, just south of Mordulkin), including Threskel, Thamor, Mordulkin, Mount Thulbane, and the Watcher's Cape.

Aurgloroasa (Shadow Dracolich): This venerable shadow dragon stalked the Thunder Peaks for centuries before her transformation. The Sibilant Shade, as she is known, was responsible for the fall of the dwarven city of Thunderholme, which she now claims as her lair, and her network of agents extends throughout Sembia and the southern Dalelands. Aurgloroasa is also notable for her fervent worship of the draconic god of death, Null.

Blas Iwan (Red Dragon): Though normally considered by the Cult to be too young to be paid much attention to, this young male red dragon of the Troll Hills heard of Sammaster's prophecies and has seemingly decided that his future lies with the Cult. In order to gain treasure and experience, the dragon and the Cult cell he is working with have created a ruse to bring adventurers to the dragon for combat experience, loot, and food.

Canthraxix (Blue Dracolich): Though he does not associate with the three green sisters in the Moonshaes, Ivy, Velora, and Talon, Canthraxix, who was an adult blue

dragon before the transformation, also serves a Cult cell in the Moonshae Isles. Though his lair or lairs are unknown, one of them has been theorized to be on the isle of Snowdown due to several appearances he has made to attack ships in that area.

Daugrothoth (Black Dracolich): This beast was a great black wyrm before his transformation by the crazed Cult mage Huulukharn. Daugrothoth slew the wizard and vanished from the knowledge and influence of the Cult after recognizing that some of the spells incorporated into the ritual were designed to give Huulukharn and the Cult a measure of control over the newly created dracolich. The Creeping Doom, as the undead wyrm is known, has acquired numerous alternative breath weapons and continues to pursue ever-greater magical achievements. Daugrothoth lairs in the abandoned subterranean gnome city of Dolblunde, located north and east of Waterdeep.

The Dire Dragon (Undead Shadow Dragon): This shadow dragon apparently achieved undeath unintentionally by misfortune of spell interaction with a wild magic area or exposure to unknown, possibly cursed, magical items. Although not a dracolich or in any way affiliated with the Followers of the Scaly Way, tales of the Dire Dragon and the Well of Dragons it guards have long been an object of great fascination to the followers of Sammaster. In the Year of the Tankard (1370 DR), the Cult finally located the vast natural cauldron concealed with shadow magic where many dragons go to die and the undying guardian of the place. While the Dire Dragon has by no means agreed to the proposed alliance tendered by the Cultists, he has allowed them to depart relatively unscathed after entertaining their proposals and accepting their extremely generous offerings.

Dretchroyaster (Green Dracolich): This venerable green dragon has recently been transformed into a dracolich following two near brushes with death at the hands of adventurers. Dretch is the descendant of the infamous green wyrm Venomindhar and her mate who ruled the Tangled Vale centuries ago. Dretch has taken up residence in Monarch's Fall Glade, the ever-growing site of a crashed elven spelljamming ship that was lost during the war between Myth Drannor and the Army of Darkness.

Ebonflame (Red Dragon): This adult red Cult dragon is power-hungry and holds a deep grudge against the church of Lathander. She has had her Cultists attack the temple in Tilverton in order to teach the Morninglord's clerics a lesson in true power.

Errant (Bronze Dragon): Unconfirmed rumors suggest that an insane bronze dragon called Errant also may serve the Cult in the Moonshaes. If this is so, for the short term this beast is likely to be used by the Cult as a spy among the other metallic dragons and those who would tend to trust such dragons, since few would instinctively distrust him due to his species.

Gotha (Red Dracolich, deceased): Gotha was a dracolich created by the god Talos after the beast foolishly forged a pact with the Destroyer. Talos imprisoned the monster beneath a mountain of ice north of the Endless Waste and the Icerim Mountains for 237 years, during which time Gotha slowly transformed into a dracolich. Gotha met his demise serving Talos in the Year of the Sword (1365 DR) in the Moonshaes. He died at the hands of Princess Alicia Kendrick, whose body was briefly subsumed as an avatar of the Earthmother (Chauntea).



Known Cult Dragons and Dracoliches, Cont'd

Iltharagh (Topaz Dracolich): This beast was a very old male topaz dragon before its recent transformation into a Sacred One of the Cult of the Dragon. Iltharagh dwelt near the mouth of the Iceflow north of Luskan for centuries, and he fought numerous territorial battles—some in the skies directly above the City of Sails—with Arveiatrace the White Wyrm, a venerable female white dragon and associate/consort of the now-deceased human wizard Meltharond, who laired to the west atop the Icepeak. Each inconclusive struggle left both beasts badly wounded and in need of extensive recuperation, but the White Wyrm always seemed to gain slightly from each confrontation. Eventually Iltharagh, despairing of ever vanquishing his hated foe, acceded to the incessant entreaties of the Cult and underwent the ritual to become a dracolich in the Year of the Wave (1364 DR). The topaz night dragon has not emerged from his lair since his unholy transformation, but his hatred for Arveiatrace continues to burn hotly in his undying heart as he plots his revenge. Itharagh is believed, like Cypress be ore him, to have retained his psionic talents even after his transformation into undeath; in fact, the transformation of Cypress was an experiment whose promise induced the Followers of the Scaly Way to seek out the first gem dragon to join the ranks of the Sacred Ones.

Incisor (Fang Dracolich): This creature was a venerable fang dragon when he underwent the transformation process. From his lair at the head of the Whitewater River (a tributary of the River Loagrann) in the Greypeak Mountains, Incisor roams the length and breadth of the Fallen Lands and the Greynale. Tales speak of his fabulous wealth, looted from the ruins of dwarven Ammarindar, as well as the countless items of magic he has plundered from Netherese ruins and learned to employ. (Fang dragons are detailed in the *Ruins of Myth Drannor* boxed set and the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Annual, Volume One*.)

Ivy Deathdealer (Green Dracolich), Velora the Poisonous (Green Dragon), and Talon Greenstrike (Green Dragon): Ivy, a green dracolich, and Velora and Talon, both mature adult green dragons, are sisters from the same brood of eggs. They all work with the Cult in the Moonshae Isles. Few targets of their combined fury survive their attacks, as what they do not destroy in their initial assault, they inevitably rip and worry apart in their subsequent sibling disputes over the spoils.

Malygris, Suzerain of Anauroch (Blue Dracolich): This beast was a very old blue dragon when he underwent the transformation process. In his undead form, he destroyed his hated ruler, Sussethilaris, the suzerain of approximately 20 blue dragons that reside within the borders of the Great Sand Sea. Malygris's rule is not without dissent, however, as several of the dragons refuse to bow to an undead dragon. Malygris has killed some of the weaker dissenters, but that only polarized the situation. Open warfare between dragon factions in Anauroch may now be only a matter of time.

"The Old One" (Black Dracolich): This dragon was of wyrm age when she became a dracolich; she resides in the ruins of Orogoth, which are found on the High Moor. This creature has a family of black dragons serving her: a mated pair, Wastirek and Vilholin, both of venerable age;

their two sons, Woklef and Aswidorg, an adult and a juvenile, respectively; and their daughter, Cheleen, a mature adult. All are her offspring or the offspring of her offspring and live in cavern complexes or ruins on the High Moor.

Plunge (Deep Dragon): Plunge, a very old deep dragon, is rumored to lair somewhere beneath Damara or Impiltur. A firm believer in Sammaster's teachings, this dragon may possess a copy of the *Tome of the Dragon*. In addition, the beast has recruited and organized several bands of duergar to serve it in its attempt to gather the ingredients for a dracolich potion. The duergar are reportedly willing to use means either monetary or violent in order to acquire the required items.

Ralionate (Green Dragon): This very old female green dragon is currently being courted by a small Cult cell in Soubar. The dragon resides within the Forest of Wyrms east of that city. The beast is reportedly sorely wounded, and the Cultists did have a dracolich potion for her to consume, but the potion has disappeared.

Shard (Blue Dragon): This old blue dragon recently fought a band of adventurers at her home, one of the small islands off the coast of Calimshan. She destroyed them, but she is slowly dying from the wounds she suffered. A Cult cell from Zazesspur hopes to transform Shard into a dracolich before she passes on, but time is of the essence.

Shhuusshuru (Shadow Dracolich): Shhuusshuru, also known as Shadow-wing, was a great female shadow wyrm before becoming a dracolich. Shadow-wing lairs in the most mountainous of the Far Hills where she plots her eventual takeover of Darkhold and, from that fortress, the whole of the Chionthar river valley. Shhuusshuru was transformed into a dracolich by the nascent Cult cell in Berdusk in a bid to obtain real power in the Western Heartlands several decades past, but she has quickly assumed the actual, if not the nominative, leadership in the group.

At Shhuusshuru's insistence, the Cult cell's second attempt to create a dracolich was attempted on Greshrukk, an old red dragon known as Red Eye, but he was slain by Harpers at the conclusion of the ceremony that transformed him into a night dragon. It is believed that Greshrukk's spirit still survives within his host object—a glassteed ruby set into the pommel of a *long sword +4, defender* named Dragonstooth—and both the Harpers and the Cult of the Dragon seek that weapon, which disappeared during the conflagration.

Saurglyce (White Dracolich): This dracolich was a mature adult female when she and the Cult lich Pox first appeared. Together the pair now seek to establish a Cult cell based near the city of Yartar in the North. Rumors have it that the Cult may be using the actions of Pox and Saurglyce to plan an assassination attempt on the life of Alustriel or an attack on her Luruaran settlements.

Velvet (Black Dragon) and Malachite (Green Dragon): Velvet is a young male black dragon and Malachite a venerable female green dragon. These two each have a Cult cell to support them, but a feud exists between the organizations and the dragons themselves. The dragons both live south of Mulmaster: Velvet in the Flooded Forest and Malachite in the wooded area to the north. The cells are believed to be based near Mulmaster (Malachite's) and Kurth or Calaunt (Velvet's).



Oh, glorious battle! yesterday I loosed my fury upon the heads of another troop of hapless mammals! That day another pathetic caravan fell before the might of Malygris!

Having received word of the insects' approach from my erstwhile allies in the Cult, I flew forth to vent my pent-up rage and breathe my searing breath upon the heads of mammals foolish enough to try to cross the Blight of Anauroch without my knowledge or license. They paid the price for their arrogance with their lives, and their cargo, of limited interest as it was to me, now rests beneath my supine serpentine form as the latest addition to my ever-growing collections. Surely I possess the greatest hoard in all of Anauroch, exceeding that of even the facile pretender Sussethilasis.

I soared high over the small band of wagons and carts, which to any eyes but mine must have seemed to be but ants mindlessly trekking their way across the infinite sands of my home, my domain, while they made a pretense of seeming alert, none detected me as I dove upon them out of the blazing sun, as I unleashed my breath of crackling energy along the wagons at the caravan's rear, the bipeds fled like crickets. The tethered beasts of burden could not flee and were cooked where they stood, still in their harnesses. The welcome scent of seared flesh reached my nostrils and further fueled my hunger for destruction.

Roaring as I completed my first pass over them, I swept up a mageling who had dared not to be awestruck by my attack in a forepaw, I crushed his frail frame until it ceased screaming, I then expertly lashed my tail over the wagons that had escaped my breath, destroying several and upsetting others. The mammals mounted a feeble attempt to dissuade me as I wheeled for another pass. Showing the insects the fate that awaited them, I raised the wizard's carcass to my mouth and pulled it to pieces, then dropped it where all could see and ponder their last moments.

But then minor magic began flaring from the huddled mammals, revealing that this caravan possessed more than a single spellhurler. While their human magics affected me little, other humans fled or desperately tried to do me harm with their minuscule missile weapons, needless to say, my second pass totally disrupted the remainder of the caravan and eliminated any possibility of escape for the mammals. With that taken care of, I landed in order to better examine my newest possessions and to give the insects the honor of seeing my power more closely before they died. More magics assailed me then, but I withstood the minute twinges of pain and fiercely sought those who had inflicted them upon me. As I crushed another of

the magelings in my jaws after plucking him from his hiding place, the feeble insects' "warriors" attacked me with their weapons of mere sharpened steel. How any race that needs to craft such weapons simply to attack its foes can consider itself evolved is beyond my ken.

In any case, my claws, wings, and tail soon dealt resounding death to most of those who had somehow not fled from my sight to perish of thirst in the endless Blight. A few, though, seemed to anticipate my attacks while more petty magics peppered me from several directions. These, like others before them, screamed in their vile tongue that they had protection, that they were of some special "keep," and that I would surely pay for my righteous attack upon them.

Within minutes, I had disposed of the last of the wizards and warriors of this far-off keep, and I sought out their treasures. While this had been a large caravan for such a difficult journey (for them), I found little of extreme worth. Liquids (only a few of any magical potency), fabrics, gold, platinum, and some lovely jewels, all were gathered together by me and inspected. Before I acted to bring the fruits of my labor back to my hoard, I ate my fill of the pack animals, both living and dead. Such fresh food does not come along often, though I have come to enjoy more regular meals since my arrangement with the Cult. My hunger sated, I then took with me the most select treasures. I chose carefully, as only the best should be added to my hoard. Weighed down with food and treasures and bearing an even heavier mantle of glory, I returned to my hidden home.

I disgorged the treasures and, placing them into suitable arrangements, settled down upon them to rest and record these events. This tome I dictate will make enlightening reading to many a hatchling after I achieve all that is destined for me. My destiny must wait though, as I now seek to—

Wait, one of my perimeter magics has just been activated by some intruder. Surely none of the mammals could move this fast, much less survive the trek to reach my home so distant from the site of my victory. So who dares to approach and interrupt my rest?

—From the magical Libram of recording of Malygris, very old blue dragon of southern Anauroch, circa 1365 DR

Foes of the Cult

"Now it is time to turn the view of this report beyond the immediate scope of the Cult itself to a broader view of Faerûn and the Cult's place in it. Sammaster made many enemies in his time, and the Cult has continued in that tradition since what may have



been the Mad Mage's final death at the hands and blades of the Company of Twelve.

"Since the Cult is broken into so many almost self-contained suborganizations, most Cult cells' enemies are regional in nature. Local authorities, adventuring bands, and even rival groups that seek to control much of the illicit trade that the Cult engages in, such as thieves' guilds, constitute the majority of each cells' antagonists. However, such regional foes are not considered in this report.

"Instead, I have focused on the groups, be they benign or malign, that threaten the Cult as a whole and that could, with luck, either destroy or subsume the majority of Cult cells. The organizations discussed here possess the resources and the drive to achieve such a goal, though the disorganization of the Cult itself makes the task a time-consuming and difficult one."

—Oracle Veshal Questa,
Sibylite of Savras and Harper,
from her report to Belhuar Thantarth, 1370 DR

In the years since Sammaster convinced the great red wyrm Shargrailar the Dark to undergo the transformation into dracolichdom, the Followers of the Scaly Way have crossed blades and spells with countless individuals and groups across Faerûn. Foes of the Cult tend to fall into two categories: those who concern themselves with Sammaster's crazed followers only when the Cultists make their presence sufficiently irksome, and those whose conflict with the Keepers of the Secret Hoard is an unending series of moves and countermoves that spark on occasion into open warfare.

The former category includes groups such as the Chosen of Mystra, who consider the deluded inheritors of the legacy of the once-Chosen Sammaster as relatively inconsequential in comparison to the threats posed by groups such as the Malaugrym, and the Twisted Rune, who consider the Cult of the Dragon as simply another pawn to manipulate in their interlocking stratagems. Even within these groups, however, there are those who take a more active interest in the Followers of the Scaly Way than others. Alustriel (CG hf M24), once the object of Sammaster's obsession, still attempts to contain the evil spawned by Sammaster and fend off the attacks of his followers who seek revenge for her perceived slighting of the First-Speaker (the latest incident of which occurred in the Year of Maidens (1361 DR)). Sapphiraktar the Blue (LE blue dracolich), a senior Runemaster of the Twisted Rune whose extensive web of agents enmeshes most of Faerûn, may owe his current undead status to the teachings of a long-lost copy of the *Tome of the Dragon*, but the elder dracolich views the Followers of the Scaly Way as bumbling with the dangerous ability to create potential rivals who could threaten his power, and thus as troublesome pests to be co-opted or eliminated.

Numerous individuals and adventuring companies fall within this first category as well. While the Cult may target such folk for short periods of time in revenge for interfering with Cult plots or to acquire an item of power one of them may hold, such conflicts rarely mushroom into undying enmity or unending strife. Notable examples in the case of the Sembian Cult cell include Shandril Shessair (CG hf 9th-level spellfire-wielder) and her husband, Narm Tama-

raith (LN hm M5), the very old bronze dragon Bethildritar of Stormsword Mountain (southernmost peak of the Thunder Peaks range), as well as groups such as the Knights of Myth Drannor, the Hunt, the Purple Flame, the Broken Sword, the Dark Dagger, the Runden, the Iron Throne, the Gold Fist, and the Dark Naga Cult.

The latter category of groups, who pursue an unending game of move and countermove with the Cult, includes organization such as the Harpers, agents of the Red Wizards of Thay, the Sorority of the Silver Fire, the Zhentarim, and the church of Tiamat. Each of these groups is detailed below, beginning with an overview of the group and including the reason or reasons behind the strife, a discussion of the ebb and flow of conflict between the two adversaries, current plots, and an overview of leaders and prominent individuals associated with the group.

The Harpers



First founded in the Year of Freedom's Friends (324 DR) as the Harpers at Twilight and refounded twice since then, Those Who Harp have long been active (meddling) in the North and in the Heartlands. The Harpers are a semisecret society allied with a number of good-aligned churches and druidic circles and composed of bards, rangers, and a scattering of other professions whose members are mostly human, half-elven, and elven. Those Who Harp believe in and fight for individual freedoms, the balance between civilization and wilderness, the rule of law administered in a just and understanding fashion, and the preservation of the past. Harpers fight against villainy and wickedness wherever it may be found as well as corruption within their own ranks. (For a much more extensive look into the group's history, organization, and members, see *The Code of the Harpers*.)

Roots of Enmity

The conflict between the Harpers and the Followers of the Scaly Way has raged since the earliest days of the Cult of the Dragon in Chondathan (later renamed Saerloon) and is rooted in the deep philosophical differences between the two groups. Where the Harpers seek individual freedoms and small kingdoms, the Cult seeks power over all and rule by the evil undead dragons its members have created. Where Those Who Harp fight for the rule of law, peace, and prosperity, the Followers of the Scaly Way seek to steal everything of value for the hoards of the Sacred Ones.

Three conflicts between the Harpers and the Cult stand out as particularly notable in the centuries-long strife between the two groups. Beginning the Year of the Sinhala (916 DR), 14 years after Sammaster created the first dracolich, the Harpers ambushed Sammaster and his retinue in a conflagration that resulted in the appearance of an avatar of Lathander and the death of the Cult's First-Speaker.

In the two decades prior to the beginning of the Harpstar War in the Year of the Tomb (1182 DR), the Cult set several traps and with them managed to kidnap or slay



several Harpers. The ranks of Those Who Harp were too small to effect a rescue, but they swore vengeance would be theirs eventually.

While the Harpstar War raged across the planes, the Harpers fell under the sway of the Harper King, the lich Thavverdasz. In the Year of the Horn (1222 DR), battle broke out between the Cult and the Harper King over the fate of a great quantity of gems destined for the dracolich Khalahmongre. When Szass Tam entered the fray in response to an earlier betrayal, many Cultists *and* Harpers were destroyed.

In the past century, the Cult has grown strong once again, creating many dracoliches and clashing with the Harpers on several occasions. Of particular note is the flight of dragons in the Year of the Worm (1356 DR) that the Followers of the Scaly Way claim to have unleashed. In the resulting draconic depredations, Syluné of the Seven Sisters and many other Harpers and Harper allies were slain.

Modes of Strife

The conflict between Those Who Harp and the Followers of the Scaly Way has periodically cycled through three phases of contention. Many senior Harpers believe that a new cycle is slowly beginning, drawing the two groups into conflict once again.

As the Cult grows strong and the ranks of the Sacred Ones numerous, the Harpers begin to infiltrate the semi-autonomous Cult cells. With their newfound information, the Harpers attack secret caravans bearing plundered wealth and seek out and destroy particularly aggressive dracoliches. These attacks draw the Cult and Those Who Harp into a shadowy conflict between individual agents that takes its toll on Harper ranks and wipes out many of the weaker Cult cells, forcing the Cult to retrench. With the Cult's resulting decrease in power and effectiveness, the Harpers move on to fight other, more pressing foes, and the surviving Keepers of the Secret Hoard begin the slow process of rebuilding their ranks and creating more dracoliches.

Current Plots

The Wearers of the Purple in Sembia, successors to the Cult cell founded by Sammaster and Algashon, are still smarting from the drubbing they received in the Year of the Prince (1357 DR) in what is termed "the spellfire incident." The loss of three Sacred Ones—Rauglothgar the Proud, Aghazstamn, and Shargrailar the Dark—decimated the ranks of allied dracoliches and forced the Keepers of the Secret Hoard to begin anew creating Sacred Ones. Recent efforts in this vein have born some successes, of which the venerable green dracolich Dretchroyaster is a notable example, and some disastrous failures, of which the now-deceased old red dragon of the southern Thunder Peaks who tended the carp of Scalewater Pond is an ignominious lesson.

Harpers in Sembia have long suspected that the Cult must maintain a base along the Way of the Manticore, for suspected Cult caravans leaving Daerlun often seem to arrive in Wheloon missing a few wagons. Maenoth (NG

hem F6/M6/T7), a Harper agent who, of course, is operating under a magically reinforced false identity, has insinuated himself into the service of Zilvreen (NE hm T19), master thief of the Sembian Cult cell, as a fighter/thief and one of Zilvreen's chief aides. From the Harper's last report, Maenoth seems to be trusted by those around him and by the oily Zilvreen himself—as much as the man's evil will allow him to trust anyone—and the Harper agent has indicated that he would be accompanying a Cult caravan headed west from Daerlun.

Leaders

The Harpers operate in two branches. The western branch is the more formal of the two. Its agents are given assignments, asked to turn in regular reports, and so on. The Harpers of Berdusk (the western branch) are run from (among other places) Twilight Hall in Berdusk, and this branch of the organization is led by Belhuar Thantharth (CG hm B9) and Cylyria Dragonbreast (LN hef B26), with Alustriel Silverhand (CG hf M24) and Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun (LN hm M27) serving as senior advisors. The eastern branch, often referred to as the Harpers of Shadowdale, is led by Storm Silverhand (CG hf B22) with the assistance of Elminster (CG hm M29 (and sage)). Other prominent Master Harpers include Dove Falconhand (CG hf R14), Laeral Silverhand (CG hf M25), and Obslin Minstrelwish (NG hf B7). (Many of the Master Harpers mentioned above are described in greater detail in the *Code of the Harpers* and the *Seven Sisters* supplements.)

The Red Wizards of Thay



Ever since Rundorl Moonsklan of the Harpers struck his dark bargain with the Szass Tam in a series of events that culminated in the rise and fall of the Harper King and the destruction of a large contingent of the Cult's forces, agents of the Red Wizards of Thay have been active in the Heartlands. The Red

Wizards are the rulers of the eastern land of Thay, and they seek to establish that land of wizards as the superior political and magical force in the Realms. The twisted plots of the Red Wizards are so tangled and the rivalries between different Red Wizards are so bloodthirsty, however, that the swaggering and boastful wizards seem to spend more time scheming against their purported allies than they do undermining the rest of the Realms. Known sometimes in the eastern Heartlands collectively as the fell Red Magic Cult (something of a misnomer), many mid-level Red Wizards actively serve as agents of the ruling Zulkirs of Thay.

Roots of Enmity

The Red Wizards and the Cult of the Dragon have struggled for supremacy in Sembia and the surrounding lands since Year of the Horn (1222 DR), when the Cult was dealt a serious setback by the attacks of first Szass Tam and then Elminster during the Cult's assault on the Harper King's cave on the edge of the Vast Swamp.



While the destruction inflicted on the Cult by the future Zulkir of Necromancy inflamed tensions for decades thereafter, the enmity between Red Wizards and the Cult of the Dragon is rooted in the similar goals the two groups share and the continuous friction created when their plots become intertwined. More than one individual targeted by both the Cult and the Red Wizards has escaped relatively unscathed when agents of the two groups clashed over who would take possession of the prize, whoever or whatever it was.

Modes of Strife

Conflict between the Red Wizards and the Followers of the Scaly Way tends to erupt every few years or so between a single Red Wizard and his minions and a small band of Cultists. Only rarely does such strife engulf more than a handful of the Red Wizards or even an entire Cult cell, and it usually dies down within a matter of weeks. In many cases, an up-and-coming member of the Cult or of the Red Wizards discovers evidence of wealth or magic accumulated by the other group and seeks to acquire it for himself or herself and his or her plans as a quick shortcut to power.

Of particular note are periodic attempts by brash Red Wizards to infiltrate Cult cells and acquire power over an affiliated Sacred One. Mastery of a dracolich to employ against one's rivals is a tactic that has occurred to more than one Red Wizard despite a history of failed attempts at such. In the Year of the Behir (1342 DR), for example, no less than three Red Wizards independently infiltrated the Cultists who attended the dracolich Khalahmongre. All three Red Wizards and most of the attending Cultists died in the internecine spell battle that erupted when the first Red Wizard made his bid for power, and Khalahmongre emerged unscathed.

Current Plots

The Eyeless Mask, an organization based in Saerloon and dedicated to the enslavement (or death) of all wizards, priests, and nobles is composed of over two dozen members including 14 Red Wizards, several thieves, some priests (faiths unknown), and various warriors. Members of the group seek all the wealth and magic they can grasp, while at the same time seeking to weaken the western Inner Sea lands magically so that they will be less able to resist a future invasion.

Within the past few months, the Eyeless Mask has increased the pace of its kidnappings in Saerloon and Selgaunt in order to fund an expansion into Daerlum. Several of the most recent abductions (including a bungled kidnapping attempt which resulted in the death of Blanchard Wyvernwalk) have been directed at prominent merchants and their families who support the Cult monetarily but who are not actively involved in its daily machinations. In clandestine meetings with the Wearers of the Purple, small groups of merchants have demanded protection and a strong retaliatory response.

Ailoth (LE hm M6), a short, white-haired Red Wizard who gathers information in Sembia and Hillsfar through a small spy network, has been posing as a moneylender and

a buyer of distressed and damaged goods. The Red Wizard has become aware that a dracolich of the Cult has been preying on caravans along the Moonsea Ride between the Standing Stone and Hillsfar. (See *The Cult Today* chapter for more details on the venerable green dracolich Dretchroyaster.) Ailoth has managed to ingratiate himself with the Hillsfarian authorities, and he is seeking to further that relationship by uncovering the identity and location of the Sacred One in exchange for future favors. Ailoth apparently is doing this to increase his own influence, weaken the Cult, and to possibly recover some of the dracolich's hoard for himself.

Farhanna Dracut (CE hf M5), an rival of Ailoth recently dispatched to Tasseldale from Thay, has recently stumbled across evidence of Ailoth's investigations and is seeking to undercut her rival by arranging to have Ailoth's investigations exposed to Tarn Blackwave (NE hm F2), a local blacksmith whom she suspects of being an agent of the Cult. Farhanna plans to track the passage of her information through the Cult's network of agents in hopes of discovering more of the Cult's hierarchy and perhaps proof of the Moonsea Ride dracolich's existence, as well.

Leaders

The leading Red Wizard active in the Heartlands has been Naglatha the Black Flame (NE hf Enc10) since the death or murder of Alzegund the Trader (LE hm M11) four years ago. A highly successful Selgauntan merchant and trader in curios and antiques, Naglatha is in truth the leader of most covert operations for the ruling Zulkirs in the Inner Sea region. Prominent Zulkirs include Szass Tam (NE hm [lich] Nec29), Zulkir of Necromancy; Lauzoril (NE hm Enc22), Zulkir of Enchantment and Charm; and Aznar Thrul (CE hm Inv23), Tharchion of the Priador and Zulkir of Invocation/Evocation. (The ruling Red Wizards of Thay are described in greater detail in the *Spellbound* boxed set.)

The Sorority of the Silver Fire



The Sorority of the Silver Fire is a secretive sisterhood of incantatrixes dedicated to the destruction of Sannaster's patrimony: the foul incantations inscribed in the *Tome of the Dragon* and the dracoliches who are the enduring legacy of his madness. (Specialists in the school of incantation, known as incantatrixes if female or as incantatars if male, are described in Appendix 2: The School of Incantation.) Composed exclusively of human and half-elven sorceresses specializing in the school of incantation (which subsumes metamagic under its aegis), this spellcasting sorority serves Mystra by seeking to undo the corruptive influence of her fallen Chosen.

In principle the 20 or so members of the Sorority are indifferent to the fate of the Cult of the Dragon and its members, but in practice individual incantatrixes find they must battle the Cult continuously in their efforts to purge Sannaster's corruptive influence from Faerûn. While many Sisters of the Silver Fire have fallen to the blades and



spells of the Cult over the years, they in turn have had great success in destroying dracoliches and the tainted knowledge held by the *Tome of the Dragon*. Despite the length of this centuries-long crusade, the Keepers of the Secret Hoard are still unaware of the existence of the organization, perceiving its influence as the actions of a series of individual crusaders.

Roots of Enmity

The Sorority of the Silver Fire was founded in the Year of Bright Nights (985 DR) by the half-elven incantatrix Fetitia Ledora, said to be the daughter of Alustriel Silverhand, and Yhelfanna the Masked, a Rashemaar witch of the Hathran. In the decade prior to their first meeting, the two incantatrices independently confronted the enduring legacy of Sammaster's madness in the form of powerful dracoliches which sought to ravage their homelands: Everlund and Rashemen, respectively. Both women felt compelled to track down the source of this blasphemous contamination of the Weave, a trek which led them to Sembia and the secret temples of the Keepers of the Secret Hoard.

When Fetitia moved to attack the Cult cell in Sembia, she found its members already engaged in a pitched battle with Yhelfanna. In the heat of battle, the two sorceresses quickly allied, and the combined power of their Art soon prevailed over the assembled Cultists and two hastily summoned Sacred Ones. After destroying a copy of the *Tome of the Dragon* held by the Sembian Cult cell at that time, the two agreed to jointly continue their quest to eliminate Sammaster's tainted legacy. From this partnership evolved the Sorority of the Silver Fire, a reference to Mystra's gift to her Chosen that Sammaster had so corrupted. It is particularly ironic that many of the metamagic spells researched, developed, and acquired from other sources by Sammaster early in his life are now employed by Sisters of the Silver Fire in their battles to undo his legacy.

Modes of Strife

Members of the Sorority of the Silver Fire usually work alone or in groups of two or three. By means of her Art, each incantatrix spends years seeking out lost copies of the *Tome of the Dragon* and the spells first penned within its covers and hunting the dracoliches created by the Cult. During the course of such investigations, the Cult often gradually becomes aware of the sorceress's unwanted attentions and attempts to quickly dispatch her with increasing amounts of effort.

When a Sister of the Silver Fire feels confident enough in her own abilities and her information, she typically recruits other adventurers to aid her in striking at selected targets. Almost invariably, this brings the incantatrix into direct conflict with the Cult and makes her the target of unrelenting attacks that persist until the local Cult cell is annihilated or until the Sister of the Silver Fire falls in battle.

Dammasae (CG hf Inc15), a human incantatrix born in the Sword Coast lands who also wielded the powers of spellfire, was a senior member of the Sorority of the Silver Fire several decades ago and a notable example of the incantatrices who comprise the sisterhood. Dammasae

fought for many years against the Cult tracking down reported sightings of the *Tome of the Dragon* and ferreting out the lairs of the Cult's dracoliches. Before she was captured by the Cult during one of its attempts to learn the secrets of spellfire, Dammasae had destroyed at least two Sacred Ones with the aid of other adventurers she had recruited. (One such adventurer was Gorstag, a warrior who later raised Dammasae's daughter Shandrill Shessair, also known for her ability to wield spellfire and her battles with the Cult.)

The sorcerer Garthond (NG hm M18), who eventually became Dammasae's husband, was an apprentice of the mage Jhavanter, and the pair contested with the Cult of the Dragon in Sembia several times. When the Cult destroyed Jhavanter and seized his abode, the Tower Tranquil located on the eastern flanks of the Thunder Peaks, Garthond continued his studies and his feud with the Cult. Eventually Garthond rescued the drugged and bound Dammasae during a raid on a Cult caravan en route to one of the group's strongholds.

The two mages fell in love, and, after traveling and adventuring together for a time, they pledged their troth before the altar of Mystra in Balduur's Gate. When Dammasae became pregnant with Shandrill, the couple resided in Elturel for a time until the babe had reached eight months of age. When they headed eastward in the company of Gorstag, the Cult attacked at the Bridge of Fallen Men and Garthond was destroyed. Dammasae died before she could reach Syluné in Shadowdale, and only Gorstag was left to hide Shandrill from the Cult.

Current Plots

Mavanna Blackspine (CN hf Inc7) has been tracking a lost copy of the *Tome of the Dragon* in the Vilhon Reach area for well over four years. In recent weeks, the raven-haired sorceress has found evidence that the Cult cell in Hlondeth has been creating ur-histachii in the city's catacombs by modifying an ancient incantation detailed in Sammaster's grimoire. Mavanna is now recruiting adventurers in Chondath and Sespech to infiltrate the City of Serpents and purloin the Cult cell's copy of the *Tome of the Dragon*.

Unbeknownst to Mavanna, she is being set up by Emerald Boa of the Vilhon Medusanna Mhairdaul (CE yaf P[Sseth]17), a yuan-ti abomination and high priestess of the preeminent temple in Hlondeth, the Cathedral of Emerald Scales. Medusanna seeks to weaken her archrival, Dediana Extaminos, ruler of Hlondeth, by undermining Dmetrio Extaminos's courtship of the daughter of Baron Foesmasher of Sespech. In the course of Mavanna's attempt to retrieve the lost copy of the *Tome*, Medusanna has arranged for the incantatrix to learn of Dmetrio's leadership of the Cult cell in Hlondeth. Mavanna, a long-held friend of Baron Foesmasher, is then sure to inform him of Dmetrio's involvement, giving the baron a pretext to end the yuan-ti pureblood's courtship of his daughter. The resulting public humiliation will weaken Dmetrio and thus, indirectly, Dediana, even though the ruler's son secretly schemes against her. (More details of the Cathedral of Emerald Scales and its inhabitants may be found in *Powers & Pantheons*.)



Cynmelin D'Athia (LG hef Inc8) has long been active in the Delimbyr Vale combating the magical excesses of the fiends of Hellgate Keep (now Hellgate Dell). While the destruction of the Keep and many of its inhabitants is a source of great relief to the young incantatrix, disturbing indications of Cult activity in the Upvale have preoccupied her of late. Cynmelin believes that the Cult of the Dragon is sending treasure-laden caravans to the lair of the late gigantic white dragon Ghaulantatra located somewhere in the mountains north of High Gap between the Delimbyr and the Fallen Lands. The "Old Mother Wyrms" once worshiped by some orc tribes in the region has become a ghost dragon since she was slain by the beholder Thaluul, and Cynmelin suspects the Cult seeks to appease the wyrm's restless spirit so that they can place a Sacred One in the strategically situated lair. While Cynmelin is fairly certain that she has correctly appraised the Cult's recent spate of activity, she believes that the eye tyrant Thaluul may still lurk within the late dragon's lair as well, albeit in undead form.

In fact, Thaluul is responsible for the Cult's presence in the region. After Thaluul and circle of allied beholders slew Ghaulantatra and seized her hoard, the white dragon returned as a ghost dragon and continued to plague the beholder despite the eye tyrant's numerous attempts to destroy her. Thaluul could not dispatch the ghost dragon's restless spirit with her former hoard for he had been forced to give nearly half of it to the eye tyrants who had assisted him in destroying the wyrm. In the Year of the Worm (1356 DR), Ghaulantatra finally succeeded in killing the eye tyrant who had murdered her. Prior to his death, however, Thaluul had worked powerful *contingency* magics ensuring he would survive his death as a ghost beholder (more commonly known as a doomsphere) and the conflict between Thaluul and the ghost dragon continues unabated after the ghost dragon's victory.

Unwilling to give up the lair for which he has sacrificed so much, Thaluul has embarked on a new plan to rid himself of the troublesome ghost dragon. Through a small network of agents, Thaluul has discreetly alerted Cultists active in the North to Ghaulantatra's current status and the strategic value of the lair which supposedly remains otherwise unoccupied. The Cult, as Thaluul hoped, has responded by dispatching large treasure caravans to the supposedly abandoned lair in hopes of permanently appeasing Ghaulantatra's restless spirit and claiming the lair. Meanwhile, Thaluul has been preparing to seize the sizable hoard once the ghost dragon has been dispatched. To rid himself of the Cultists once their usefulness has expired, the undead beholder has made sure that Cynmelin is alerted to the Cult's activity in the expectation that she will recruit adventurers to dispatch the Cultists, thus leaving Thaluul unchallenged in the possession of the newly acquired hoard and the Old Mother Wyrms' lair.

Leaders

With the deaths in recent decades of Dammasae and several other senior Sisters of the Silver Fire, the sisterhood is currently led by younger practitioners of less skill than at any other time in the group's history. Notable among the

loosely organized council of seven that currently leads the group are Ioelena of the Argent Robes (NG hf Inc12), Fieryat Ildacer (CG hef Inc9), and Blethran Lhlybihi the Gray Witch (N hf Inc10).

The Zhentarim



The Black Network of the Zhentarim is a not-so-secret group of wizards, priests, fighters, thieves, and allied beholders devoted to the task of dominating trade and therefore acquiring power throughout the Heartlands. Anything that cannot be controlled directly must be threatened into compliance or crippled so severely that it can never again pose a threat to the Black Network. The Zhentarim are active throughout the Heartlands, but currently they have three major bases of operation: Zhentil Keep, the Citadel of the Raven, and Darkhold. The Black Network's unsavory activities include trade in poisons, illicit drugs, weapons, and slaves, as well as conquest, assassination, theft, blackmail, kidnapping, and torture.

Roots of Enmity

While the Cult attributes its hatred of all things Zhentish to Sammaster's early experiences with a Zhent slaving caravan and the refusal by Zhentil Keep's inhabitants to bow to the Cult's demands for "safe passage" fees from their caravans, the Zhents truly took notice of the mad Followers of the Scaly Way in the Year of the Dracorage (1018 DR) when a flight of dragons believed to be summoned by the Cult of the Dragon nearly destroyed Zhentil Keep. In any case, the last 350 plus years have witnessed an unending series of attacks and counterattacks between the two groups as they struggle for power and wealth in all their myriad forms.

Modes of Strife

While the Zhentarim were not founded until the Year of Bright Dreams (1261 DR), they quickly assumed the city's long-standing hatred of the mad Cultists, which was only reinforced by the most recent flight of dragons in the Year of the Worm (1356 DR) in which three wyrms attacked the Citadel of the Raven and two others raged throughout the streets of Zhentil Keep. The struggle between the Zhentarim and the Cult tends to occur in the shadows within civilized lands, such as Sembia, and out in the open in the unsettled hinterlands of the Heartlands, such as Anauroch, the Stonelands, and Thar.

Throughout the cities and towns of the Heartlands, agents of the Cult and the Black Network struggle for control of the lucrative underworld operations they both covet. Whether such conflicts erupt in the back alleys of Saerloon between the Zhentarim-infiltrated Night Knives and Cult strike forces or along the southern reaches of Rauthauvyr's Road between passing caravans, battles between the Black Network and the Cult of the Dragon are frequent, brief, deadly, and usually inconclusive.

Away from the settled regions of Cormyr, Sembia, and the Dalelands, the Keepers of the Secret Hoard have exe-



cuted both frontal assaults using dragons and dracoliches as well as sneak attacks on Zhentarim strongholds, and more recently they have begun to strike at Zhentarim trade caravans in an attempt to procure Zhent riches. In turn, the Zhentarim have destroyed dracoliches whose territorial claims threatened their precious trade routes and attacked Cult caravans that crossed lands under their control or carried riches too fabulous to ignore.

Current Plots

The Zhentarim have long struggled to establish trade routes across Anauroch, the Great Desert. Toward this end, the Black Network struck a deal with Sussethilaris, Suzerain of the Great Blight, allowing Zhent caravans to pass through his demesne with his protection in exchange for significant tithes to his hoard. The Cult of the Dragon undercut this agreement by supplanting Sussethilaris with Malygris, a very old blue dragon it induced into dracolichdom by manipulating the rivalry between the two wyrms.

The Zhentarim retaliated against the Cult's extortionist demands on Zhent caravans crossing the Great Sand Sea by assaulting the strongholds of the Sembian Cult cell with the full force of the Zhentarim's magical might. The Cult retaliated in turn by dispatching Malygris and his newly transformed mate, Verianthraxa, to the Citadel of the Raven, but the Black Network was well prepared and Malygris's queen fell to the spells and blades of the waiting Zhentarim. The situation is still fluid and unsettled, and further strife may yet erupt between the two groups. In the meantime, trade between Zhentil Keep and the North has ground nearly to a halt, and scarcities of legal and illicit goods are rising slowly, though caravans run along more southerly trade routes avoiding Anauroch are trying to pick up their paces to take advantage of the situation.

The Cult cell located north of Glistar has awakened the great black wyrm Iyrauroth, slayer of Ologh the Overking of the orcsish kingdom of Vastar in the Year of Writhing Darkness (572 DR), from his centuries-long slumber beneath the steppelands of Thar in hopes of inducing the great wyrm to become a dracolich. Merely amused by the Cult's offerings, the ancient beast has begun to raid caravans traveling between Glistar and Melvaunt or Phlan as he wishes, including those sent by the Cult.

Given the activities of the Sembian Cult cell in Anauroch, the Zhentarim reached the natural conclusion that the Cult cell in Glistar was repeating the same tactic in Thar when an entire caravan en route to Glistar simply vanished—and agents of the Black Network among the ogres and orcs of Thar reported the recent activity in the region of an unknown black wyrm. In response to the Cult's perceived threat to trade in the region, the Inner Circle of the Zhentarim has been rapidly moving Zhentilar into Thar over the objections of Phlan and Melvaunt. To counter the military build-up, Dragon Cultists in Glistar have sent word to the Sacred Ones of the Western Galenas and their attending Cultists of the growing threat and have begun rallying the tribes of Thar to their standard. The outcome of this brewing war is as yet undetermined, but it is sure to

convulse the Great Gray Land of Thar for months, if not years, to come.

Leaders

The Inner Circle of the Zhentarim is comprised of Manshoon (LE hm M19), Sememmon of Darkhold (LE hm M15), and Fzoul Chembryl (LE hm P[lyachtu Xvim]16). (All three leaders are described in greater detail in the *Ruins of Zhentil Keep* boxed set and in the *Villains' Lorebook*.)

The Church of Tiamat



The Church of Tiamat, little known in the western Realms, venerates the chromatic Dragon, a lesser power of Unther whose worshipers have begun to spread across Faerûn. Also known as the Nemesis of the Gods, the Dark Lady, Queen of Chaos (something of a misnomer), the Undying Queen, Bane of

Bahamut, and the Avaricious, Tiamat is the legendary Queen of Evil Dragons. Her followers seek to overthrow all other gods, and toward that end they acquire as much wealth and magic as they can accumulate. The church of Tiamat is strong in Unthalass and much of Unther, and it has growing centers of power in Sembia, the Vilhon Reach, and Vaasa. (For further details on Tiamat and her followers, see *Powers & Pantheons*.)

Roots of Enmity

Strife between the Tiamat's faithful and the Followers of the Scaly Way is a relatively recent development. Only in the past few decades have the two groups even become aware of each other's existence. The Dragon Queen is little known outside of the Old Empires of Unther, Chessenta, and Mulhorand. Those who know of her are more likely to think of her as a powerful legendary monster than as a divine power.

The Time of Troubles convinced Tiamat that she had to quickly acquire greatly increased power if her presence in the Realms was to survive the collapse of the Untheric pantheon. The Cult of the Dragon, composed of powerful but godless cultists predisposed to worship dragons, was just too tempting a target for the Dragon Queen to resist absorbing into her faith. The Dark Lady expects strong resistance from the more powerful Cult cells' leaders, but she feels that the fractious nature of the Cult actually plays well into her plan. She can conquer the smaller cells easily enough, she feels, most often from within by proselytizing to the Cult members. Then, with numerous cells under her wings and the benefits additional worshipers give her, she can overcome the powerful cells. Tiamat is certain that no secular organization can withstand the concerted efforts of a group united both by faith and by clerical power supplied from a true deity.

In the years since the Time of Troubles, Tiamat's faithful have begun to infiltrate and co-opt the Cult's vast network of followers. As expected, the efforts of the Dark Lady's fol-



lowers have been opposed at every turn by the entrenched Keepers of the Secret Hoard, and her faithful have been subjected to unspeakable tortures when their true allegiance was exposed. On the other hand, Tiamat has been warmly received by a significant minority of the lesser-ranking, disillusioned Cultists and Cult supporters, who have begun to accept her as the “essence of dracoliches” in her role as the Undying Queen. In response, a few high-ranking Cult dissenters (particularly in the Sembian Cult cell) have turned to Null, the draconic god of death, to counter the Chromatic Dragon’s growing influence. (For further details on Null and his followers, see Appendix 1: Dragon Deities.)

Modes of Strife

While the Cult of the Dragon has long been wracked by feuds between its leaders, undermined by traitors and spies, and attacked by rival groups and determined individuals, it has never faced a true religion trying to co-opt its membership. As a result, the internal strife that now threatens to tear apart what Sammaster created has been more chaotic and less directed than normal for the Followers of the Scaly Way.

The church of Tiamat has targeted more than one Cult cell in what has become a familiar pattern. First, followers of the Dragon Queen track down suspected Cult cells, identify likely members, and get themselves recruited to join the Cult. Second, mid-ranking clergy members worm themselves into the bottom ranks of the Cult and quickly make a name for themselves within the Cult cell thanks their hidden abilities. Third, such infiltrators secretly reveal the “long-anticipated coming of the Undying Queen” to disenchant Cultists who seem uncommitted to the Cult hierarchy. Fourth, if they have not yet been discovered by the Cult leadership, the followers of Tiamat engender a split between rival leaders of the Cult. Finally, they offer their services, as well as those of all who have heeded Tiamat’s call, to the second-most-powerful faction in exchange for acknowledgment of the Dark Lady as the divine presence behind the Cult.

The Keepers of the Secret Hoard have responded to the grave threat to their personal power posed by Tiamat’s followers in a variety of fashions. Some openly turn their forces against those whose loyalty is suspect. Others use their opponents’ own methods against them in accordance with the commonly observed phenomena that the weak are easily swayed. In Sembia, the Wearers of the Purple have betrayed any members they suspect of harboring sympathies for the Dark Lady by exposing their affiliation to the Cult to the local authorities, the Harpers, or Zhentarim rivals. As noted above, a few dissenters in that cell have even turned to Null, the Death Wyrm, as a counter to the growing threat of Tiamat’s faith, though Null is ill-equipped to tend to nondraconic members of his faith (and frankly rather puzzled by them).

Current Plots

Rumors concerning the existence of a multiheaded dracolich beneath the ruins of Castle Perilous have begun to circulate amongst the members of the Sembian Cult cell. The Wearers of the Purple are divided on how to respond to this latest threat to their personal power. While the normal

Cult response to reports of a new-found dracolich, no matter how unusual, would be to dispatch a small group of agents to investigate, Naergoth Bladelord (NE hm F22) is concerned that the rumored Sacred One, should it actually exist, might delude some of the less committed Followers of the Scaly Way into believing the lies of Tiamat’s clergy. To avoid the risk of “proving” Tiamat’s authority over Sammaster’s followers, the Wearers of the Purple have deliberately leaked evidence of the supposed dracolich’s existence to several moderately skilled adventuring groups and a few Harper agents. The Cult leaders’ plan presupposes that one of these groups will find the means to investigate the Witch-King’s cairn. When such an expedition is dispatched, the most trusted agents of the Sembian Cult cell’s ruling council will observe the resulting fracas from afar and record the dracolich’s display of power, assuming it exists, as well as the might of any allies it has gathered in service. Based on the intelligence acquired, the Wearers of the Purple will then respond appropriately.

Threskel, considered to be part of both Unther and Chessenta at various times in history, has fallen under the sway of Alasklerbanbastos, the Great Bone Wyrm. Alasklerbanbastos lairs beneath Dragonback Mountain, northernmost peak of the Riders to the Sky mountain range between Unther and Chessenta. The former great blue wyrm is attended by several younger chromatic dragons as well as numerous human Cultists. The territorial ambitions of the self-proclaimed Overking of Chessenta threaten the very heart of Unther itself, and, as such, the church of Tiamat based in Unthalass. The Dark Scaly Ones of Unther are reacting to this challenge to their authority with a violent series of attacks against suspected Cultists and Cult holdings across anarchic Unther and the city-states of Chessenta. These attacks threaten to incite a flight of dragons against the cities of Unther and Chessenta, and, possibly, deadly battles between the two groups’ allied wyrms. The fallout from such open warfare would assuredly devastate the already suffering populace of the region.

Leaders

The church of Tiamat is led by the high priests of the Dragon Queen who are collectively known as the Dark Scaly Ones, a practice originating in Unther. Shudu-Ab (LE hf P[Tiamat]18), Wyrm Princess of the Dark Scaled Ones and High Priestess of the Altar of Scales (located in the catacombs of ruined Unthalass), has succeeded Tiglath as the leader of the Dragon Queen’s cult in Unther. Shudu-Ab has pretensions, so far unrealized, of uniting all of Tiamat’s followers in the Realms under her rule as the Dark Lady’s mortal regent. Other prominent Dark Scaly Ones include Hesthera Drake-talons (LE hf P[Tiamat]13), leader of the Handmaidens of the Undying Queen beneath the ruins of Castle Perilous in Vaasa; Deiros Forktongue (LE hm P[Tiamat]11), a wyrmkeeper (specialist priest), and Ssenidak Wyrmspear (LE male lizard man F11/C9), Fire of the First Lizard, leaders of Tiamat’s cult in Surkh; and Kedrak Gilbane (LE hm Cru15), Lord High Marshal of the Knights of the Five-Thorned Rose and titular commander of the Serpent Guards.



IT is indeed . . . fortunate . . . that this Libram still exists . . . to record my thoughts for posterity. Little else . . . in my home still endures. Even my own future . . . is in doubt.

I was viciously betrayed, attacked . . . here, in my very home, by Sussethllasis and a potent human wizard who had somehow escaped my victory over the caravan. The mage must have fled via magic to the very scaled side of my suzerain, telling that bastard spawn of a wyvern Sussethllasis of my doings.

Together they traveled here from Sussethllasis' fastness in the north to punish me for my transgression. The wizard aided Sussethllasis in overcoming my magical defenses. It even bragged that those protective measures had been enchanted only to stop draconic visitors, not humans. The mage was therefore able to discover and dismantle all but the first alarm before triggering them.

The battle was nevertheless awesome; I nearly overcame the pair of them. They required treachery to defeat my might. Sussethllasis ignored the rules of the feint, and worse, he allowed a human to fight at his side. Oh, my suzerain tried to explain away his cowardice by saying their craven act was but retribution, revenge for continued wrongs against himself and his agreement with the mages of this far-off "keep" over the trade routes that crossed my own domain within the Blight. My "repeated offenses" had earned me this, they said. At least the arrogant insect-mage did not survive the battle; that, at least, my mighty fangs were able to ensure.

Sussethllasis "allowed" me to live in order to ponder my position, to reconsider my future place in his greater scheme, he said. If I survive my wounds and recover, there will come a day when I show him his place, his place in my great scheme, but first . . . rest, then revenge. Must rest now. . . .

I was awakened from an almost too-deep slumber by Namirrrha. He and his followers plied me with potions, spells (he had a priest with him, I think), and even anointed my wounds with salves. He spoke of hearing of my battles these days past and coming to share my glories. Instead, I fear he saved my life.

As his lackeys ministered to me, Namirrrha spoke of the terrible vengeance I would wreak on my attackers, my betrayers. He shouted of my horrible anger, my righteous wrath, the furious retribution I would bring down upon the heads of my enemies. Namirrrha must have known that, even with his minor magics aiding my recovery, it would still be years of human time before I again had the might to stand claw-to-claw with the pre-

tender Sussethllasis. And waiting to recover and hoarding my strength was a tactic that even the suzerain himself could foresee and would prepare for when the time drew near. No, I feared I must remain here with my wounds, stewing in the depths of my indignation until such time as I could again soar forth and mark my domain as my own.

"No," Namirrrha claimed, "vengeance," he said, "can be yours within the tending." Namirrrha said the Cult was always ready to offer its mightiest of treasures to the mightiest of Faerûn's dragons. He said he could return with the necessary components in but a day. The process would be complete within a mere seven days after that.

"Imagine the pretender's surprise," Namirrrha whispered, "upon the day you fly to him and best him in his very lair, thus ending his corrupt and misbegotten rule. Imagine taking your place upon the suzerain's perch. Then—then will Anauroch have a truly powerful ruler, a dragon worthy of the title of suzerain."

His grasp of tactics is undeniably apt. The fool and pretender would never expect such retaliation from me considering the state he left me in, and the thought of it occurring this quickly surely would never cross his insignificant mind. Such a plan would succeed, even if it means the transformation. . . .

Zorquan forgive me, but I must do it. Is it not a dragon's right, no, his mandate to take power when possible? Is it not my right to avenge myself upon the traitor who follows not our own rules! Only a fool, as speaks Namirrrha, would pass up such an opportunity. And is not magic magic? To refuse power, any power, is truly insane.

Then let treachery be met with treachery. Let my vengeance be spoken of across this place and time, let it be so.

"Very well," I spoke to the necromancer. "Do what you must to affect the transformation. Let the powers of your Cult, of the might of this Sammaster's magic, fill me. I will have my vengeance—and very soon."

—From the magical Libram of recording of Malvgris, very old blue dragon of southern Anauroch, circa 1365 DR

The Magic and Monsters of the Cult

"The mad genius of Sammaster cannot be overstated. His drive to explore the boundaries of magic—and later of life, death, and undeath—propelled the studies of both metamagic and necromancy far beyond what any individual mage had accomplished



before or since. Sammaster's magical legacy cannot be denied. In order to better understand the man and his other most famous creation, the Cult of the Dragon, I have endeavored to gather or collate quite a few of the magical spells created by the mad mage.

"However, do not be led to the conclusion that spells alone were the fruits of Sammaster's twisted genius. After he discovered that now-famous passage from Maglas' tome and mistranslated it, all forms of draconic life and death became his obsession. He performed countless magical and hybridizing experiments with unborn, young, and mature dragons—most often against the creatures' wills. I have been able to ascertain that all but one of the creatures detailed in this report either were created by Sammaster himself or Cult mages with access to his researches. (The lone exception being the independent ghost dragon.) Some extremely dubious Cult researchers also claim that such semidraconic beings as the dracolisk, the dracosphinx, and the dragonne were also created by Sammaster's perverted experimentations. As always, one must consider the source."

—Oracle Veshal Questa,
Sibylite of Savras and Harper,
from her report to Belhuar Thantarth, 1370 DR

Sammaster's Spells

Sammaster was a brilliant wizard whose early career featured many discoveries and advancements (and some say appropriations and misuses) in the field of metamagic. (Incantatrixes, in particular, feel he stole a lot from the School of Incantation.) The metamagic spells listed here are rare in modern Faerûn. Metamagic is not a recognized school of magic by any means, but a philosophical grouping of spells that affect other magical spells, items, or effects. As such, though some of the spells below are noted as belonging to the metamagic "school," most qualify as alteration magic. For purposes of comparison, the Simbul and Elminster are modern-day masters of the metamagic school of thought, and examples of their prowess in this area of magical research include *The Simbul's spell sequencer*, *spell trigger*, *spell supremacy*, and *synostodweomer*, and the Sage of Shadowdale's spells *Elminster's evasion* and *effulgent epuration*. (See the *Heroes' Lorebook* for details on these spells.)

Also incorporated into the list and the spell descriptions below are many of the necromantic spells Sammaster created after his fall from grace with Mystra. While his drive to create was not lessened, his demented mind turned to ever more depraved fields of interest. Many of the necromantic spells below resulted from Sammaster's insane but insightful researches into necromancy and, ultimately, led in turn to his discovery of the process for creating dracoliches.

Sammaster's known spells can be found in the book he wrote as he went about creating his cult, the *Tome of the Dragon*. (See Magical Items below for details on this grimoire.) Copies of this book have been disseminated to all Cult cells and many individual members of the Cult of the Dragon; however, none of these copies exactly duplicate the original due to scribal errors and decisions about the relative importance of various sections made by particular

cells. (DMs may make certain spells that are listed here unavailable or judge that they do not function properly or at all due to a copying error at their discretion.) Sammaster himself also may have devised other magics that he did not entrust to the pages of the original *Tome of the Dragon*, though that work is believed to be comprehensive. Nevertheless, most of the following spells are available to Cult wizards. A list of more commonly known spells is given first, followed by a detailed description (in AD&D® game terms) of the less well-known and unique spells.)

Common Spells

These common spells are found in the source given as part of the parenthetical notes of the spell's level and schools: CBN=Complete Book of Necromancers; PFTM=Pages From the Mages; PHB=Player's Handbook; ToM=Tome of Magic. In addition to those spells from the *Player's Handbook* specifically noted below, most other necromancy spells from that work can be deemed to have been included in the original *Tome of the Dragon*.

The spells are: *Alacrity* (Wiz 3; Alteration, Metamagic; ToM); *animate dead animals* (Wiz 1; Necromancy; CBN); *augmentation I* (Wiz 3; Invocation/Evocation, Metamagic; ToM); *augmentation II* (Wiz 6; Evocation, Metamagic; ToM); *bind undead* (Wiz 5; Necromancy; CBN); *bone dance* (Wiz 3; Necromancy; CBN); *chain contingency* (Wiz 9; Evocation, Metamagic; ToM); *contingency* (Wiz 6; Evocation, Metamagic; PHB); *corpse host* (Wiz 6; Necromancy; CBN); *corpse link* (Wiz 1; Necromancy, Alteration; CBN); *death shroud* (Wiz 8; Necromancy; CBN); *death ward* (Wiz 9; Abjuration, Necromancy; CBN); *dilation I* (Wiz 4; Alteration, Metamagic; ToM); *dilation II* (Wiz 6; Alteration, Metamagic; ToM); *dispel magic* (Wiz 3; Abjuration, PHB); *embalm* (Wiz 2; Necromancy, Alteration; CBN); *extension I* (Wiz 4; Alteration, Metamagic; PHB); *extension II* (Wiz 5; Alteration, Metamagic; PHB); *extension III* (Wiz 6; Alteration, Metamagic; PHB); *far reaching I* (Wiz 3; Alteration, Metamagic; ToM); *far reaching II* (Wiz 4; Alteration, Metamagic; ToM); *far reaching III* (Wiz 5; Alteration, Metamagic; ToM); *imbue undead with spell ability* (Wiz 6; Necromancy; PFTM); *intensify summoning* (Wiz 7; Conjunction/Summoning, Necromancy, Metamagic; ToM); *locate remains* (Wiz 1; Necromancy, Divination; CBN); *lower resistance* (Wiz 5; Abjuration, Alteration, Metamagic; ToM); *magic staff* (Wiz 5; Enchantment/Charm, Metamagic; ToM); *minor spell turning* (Wiz 4; Abjuration, Metamagic; ToM); *Mordenkainen's celerity* (Wiz 4; Alteration, Invocation, Metamagic; PHB); *Mordenkainen's disjunction* (Wiz 9; Alteration, Enchantment, Metamagic; PHB); *Mordenkainen's lucubration* (Wiz 6; Alteration, Metamagic; PHB); *permanency* (Wiz 8; Alteration, Metamagic; PHB); *Rary's mnemonic enhancer* (Wiz 4; Alteration, Metamagic; PHB); *sense shifting* (Wiz 2; Alteration, Metamagic; ToM); *skeletal hands* (Wiz 2; Necromancy, Evocation; CBN); *skulltrap* (Wiz 3; Necromancy, Evocation; CBN); *spectral voice* (Wiz 1; Necromancy, Alteration; CBN); *spellstrike* (Wiz 9; Alteration, Metamagic; PFTM); *squaring the circle* (Wiz 3; Alteration, Metamagic; ToM); *steal enchantment* (Wiz 7; Enchantment/Charm, Metamagic; ToM); *summon spirit* (Wiz 4; Necromancy; CBN); *transmute bone to steel* (Wiz 6; Alteration, Necromancy; CBN); *Tulrun's*



tracer (Wiz 4; Divination, Alteration; *PFTM*); and *vampiric touch* (Wiz 3; Necromancy; *PHB*).

Uncommon and Rare Spells 1st Level

Command Undead (Wiz 1; Necromancy)

Range: 0
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1
Duration: 1 hour+1 turn/level
Area of Effect: The caster
Saving Throw: None

This spell allows the wizard to command undead creatures exactly as an evil priest of the same level. The caster can control the same number and type of creatures and requires the same roll on the Turn Undead table to take command. The wizard is allowed only one command check per encounter during the spell's duration; if it succeeds, she or he controls 2d6 undead. If the command attempt fails, the wizard cannot try again.

Enlarge Skeleton (Wiz 1; Necromancy)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1
Duration: 1 turn/level
Area of Effect: One skeleton
Saving Throw: None

This spell can be applied to all or part of a human-sized or smaller skeleton, but fails if used on bones of different individuals. It is effective on both undead and normal skeletal remains; if applied to an undead creature, it has no effect on controls or commands already in existence affecting the creature but does not itself establish any such control. An *enlarge skeleton* can turn an animal skeleton into a monster skeleton and a normal human skeleton into a giant skeleton (as per the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* tome). When applied to nonanimated remains, it is usually employed to make a bone longer and heavier for use as a prop, tool, or weapon.

This spell can be applied to only part of a skeleton, lengthening it to a maximum of twice what it was before the spell was applied. This is usually employed to lengthen the stump of a missing arm into a longer limb, but can also be used as an attack (for example, to make a hostile skeleton fall over by making one leg twice the length of the other).

The spell has utterly no effect on the bones of living creatures.

Spectral Ears (Wiz 1; Necromancy, Alteration)

Range: 10 yards/level
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1
Duration: 1 turn/level
Area of Effect: The caster
Saving Throw: None

By casting this spell, a wizard establishes an auditory link himself or herself and a skeleton or zombie within the spell's range. This link allows the caster to hear any sounds that occur within the vicinity of the undead being. The wizard can hear exactly as if she or he were standing where the undead creature is standing (a wizard/thief can use the thieflily hear noise ability, too).

The spell also allows the caster to order the undead creature via the link. Such commands are limited to four words ("turn left," "walk forward two steps," and so on). If the undead creature moves beyond the spell's range, then the spell ends immediately. If the skeleton is under the direct, active control of another being, the commanding function of the spell automatically fails.

The material component for this spell is a mummified ear.

Undead Servant (Wiz 1; Necromancy)

Range: 10 yards
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 turn
Duration: 1 hour+1 turn/level
Area of Effect: 1 body or skeleton
Saving Throw: None

This spell allows the wizard to temporarily animate the body or bones of a dead human, demihuman, or humanoid creature of man size or smaller. The animated creature is treated as a zombie or skeleton, as appropriate (see the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* tome). The undead servant obeys simple verbal commands until destroyed, dispelled, or the spell duration expires.

The material component is a pinch of graveyard dirt.

2nd level

Animate Skeletons (Wiz 2; Necromancy)

Range: 30 feet+10 feet/level
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 round
Duration: Instantaneous
Area of Effect: 1 skeleton/level
Saving Throw: None

This specialized version of the animate dead spell produces one skeleton for each level of the caster. The animated skeletons obey the simple verbal commands of the caster and remain animated until destroyed in combat or turned by a priest; the magic cannot be dispelled.

Only the skeletons of humans, demihumans, and bipedal humanoid monsters of 1 Hit Die or less can be animated by means of this spell. The experience levels of the slain are ignored; the newly animated skeletons are treated as normal skeletons (see the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* tome).

The material component for this spell is a drop of blood and a pinch of bone powder or a shard of bone, plus a special salve that costs at least 10 gp per dose to produce. The wizard must rub the bones to be affected with the salve. One dose can animate a single skeleton and requires one round to apply. The wizard can wait up to 24 hours before



finishing the animating spell with a single word. The nearest treated skeletons within both the range and the caster's level limit animate.

Attract Ghoul (Wiz 2; Necromancy)

Range: 1 mile/level
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 2d12 hours
Duration: Instantaneous
Area of Effect: 1 ghoul
Saving Throw: Special

This spell summons a ghoul to act as a necromancer's aide and familiar. (It only works for necromancer specialist wizards, though mages and other wizards may not discover that until after casting the spell.) It may or may not succeed in attracting a ghoul, depending on whether or not one is in range; the chance of success is 10%, plus 5% per level. The caster can converse easily with the ghoul and shares an empathic link with the monster. He or she can issue it mental commands at a range of up to 1 mile, receiving emotional responses—anger, fear, hunger, etc.—in return. The ghoul is willing to serve as a guard, scout, or spy, undertaking any task demanded, but in return the necromancer must keep the ghoul well fed and provide it with a defensible lair of the appropriate kind. Should the necromancer fail to meet these conditions, the ghoul wanders off and resumes its normal activities. There is a 5% chance to attract a ghast, which attacks unless the caster is 6th level or higher, but which otherwise serves as does a ghoul.

The summoned ghoul is an exceptionally intelligent and strong specimen with at least 10 hit points and average Intelligence (instead of low Intelligence). A necromancer can have no more than one ghoul servant bound to him or her at any one time by this spell, and it will tend to not get along with any other familiar the necromancer might have. Any ghouls created by the necromancer's servant are not under the necromancer's control and might attack the necromancer unless the servant ghoul is also present.

If the ghoul remains more than 1 mile distant from the necromancer for a full week, the empathic link is broken, and the ghoul is no longer bound to serve (although it may be favorably disposed toward its former master if treated well). If the ghoul is destroyed, the necromancer is immediately aware of the creature's demise and must make a system shock check; failure means incapacitation for 1d6 hours.

The *attract ghoul* spell is an unusually taxing and powerful enchantment and can be cast only once per year.

The spell requires a censer full of myrrh and bitter herbs worth at least 500 gp.

Become Bones

(Wiz 2; Illusion/Phantasm, Necromancy)

Range:
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 2
Duration: 1 turn+1d6 rounds

Area of Effect: The caster
Saving Throw: None

This spell temporarily alters the body of the caster into the semblance of a human skeleton, causing flesh, tissue, organs (including eyes), clothing, and gear to become invisible. The skills, mobility, and functions of the body are unaltered. While in this form, unintelligent undead creatures ignore the caster.

This spell is normally used to disguise the caster's identity (or even presence, if used in a crypt). It can be ended early (and instantly) if the caster commands it to expire. The effects do not automatically expire if the caster attacks, as in *invisibility*.

Death Armor (Wiz 2; Abjuration, Necromancy)

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 2
Duration: 1 round/level
Area of Effect: The caster
Saving Throw: Special

Any time within 8 hours of casting this spell, the wizard must spend two full rounds anointing his or her garments and body with an unguent. Once the wizard is coated, the *death armor* can then be invoked at any time in the next 8 hours with a casting time of 2. If the wizard does not activate the spell's protection during this time, the unguent is expended with no effect.

This spell surrounds the caster with a crackling black aura that injures any creature that comes into contact with it. Once the caster activates the spell's protection, any creature that strikes the wizard with bare hands or its own natural weapons must make a saving throw vs. death magic. Failure means the creature suffers 2d6 points of damage. The wizard sustains full damage from any successful attack.

Most normal animals and any monster attacking without weapons are subject to this spell, including humanoid creatures that choose to grapple, pummel, or overbear the caster. Weapons and ranged attacks inflict damage on the caster normally.

Any number of creatures can be affected by the *death armor*, suffering the effect for each attack they make. Animal Intelligence and semi-intelligent creatures, if they attack at all, usually abort a multiple-attack routine when they first take damage.

The *death armor* spell is a passive defense; the wizard himself or herself must save against its effects if she or he tries to grasp or grapple an enemy. The spell ends after one round per caster level.

A caster slain while wearing *death armor* is engulfed in a burst of black energy. His or her next resurrection survival check must be made at a -20% penalty.

The material component for this spell is a rare unguent worth at least 300 gp.



Find Familiar-Necromancer (Wiz 2; Summoning)

Range: 1 mile/level
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 2d6 hours
Duration: Special
Area of Effect: 1 familiar
Saving Throw: Special

This spell can only be cast by necromancer specialist wizards. Except for the types of familiars, the timing of the casting (must be under a full moon), and the cost for the ingredients (which is doubled to 2,000 gp), this is much the same as the wizard's *find familiar* spell. The necromancer uses a special table to determine what, if any, familiar arrives.

Imps and quasits will not serve a master of less than 4th level. If one arrives at the call of a necromancer of 1st to 3rd level, the creature will, instead of serving, agree to return when the necromancer is more powerful. In the meantime, the necromancer must find another familiar, for when the imp or quasit returns, it kills and eats its predecessor to seal the bargain. The necromancer suffers the usual penalties for the death of the first familiar: a system shock survival roll is required and a point of Constitution lost.

1d20 Familiar	Sensory Powers
1-3 Black cat	Excellent night vision & superior hearing
4-5 Giant rat	Superior olfactory power
6 Frog	Wide-angle vision
7 Giant centipede	Very sensitive touch
8 Large spider	Wide-angle vision
9 Bat	Very superior hearing
10 Raven	Excellent vision
11 Imp	See MONSTROUS MANUAL
12 Quasit	See MONSTROUS MANUAL
13-20 No familiar, cannot try again until next month.	

An imp or quasit familiar acquired by this spell receives no bonus hit points based on the caster's level, nor does it waste away if separated from the necromancer. If it is killed, the necromancer suffers the standard penalties for loss of a familiar.

Protection From Deathbane (Wiz 2; Necromancy)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1
Duration: 2 rounds/level
Area of Effect: Creature touched
Saving Throw: None

This spell enables a wizard to protect one undead creature from the effects of dweomers that are particularly baneful to undead creatures. The protected creature receives two benefits. First, the undead creature has a +2

bonus to saving throws against spells that have special effects against the undead. Furthermore, the undead creature receives a saving throw if nonundead creatures have one, even if the effect normally forbids one to undead creatures. Second, the protection negates any bonus damage specifically affecting undead from any source (spell, item, etc.). For example, while the protection is not effective against the disintegration power of a *mace of disruption*, it is effective against the damage bonuses of that weapon. The protection lasts for 2 rounds per level of the caster and lends itself to *permanency* and similar spells.

The material component is ash sprinkled in a circle around the creature to be protected.

Resist Turning (Wiz 2; Abjuration)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 2
Duration: 2 rounds/level unless triggered
Saving Throw: None
Area of Effect: 15-foot radius

This spell protects undead creatures from being turned or commanded by priests (including paladins). When a turning attempt is made against protected undead, the DM secretly rolls a single resistance roll. The resistance succeeds on a 1d20 roll of 16 or more, adjusted for the difference in level between the caster and turning priest. (For example, if the caster is 9th level and the turning priest is 5th level, the roll needed to resist turning is 12 or better.) Successful resistance means the turning attempt fails. A resistance roll of 1 means the resistance fails, regardless of level difference.

Once this protection is triggered, the spell protects undead in its area for that round, then ends. If not triggered within two rounds per level of the caster, the spell ends.

The caster can center this spell on himself or herself, on a particular touched creature or object, or on a fixed location. The spell protects undead within 15 feet of the focal point at the instant of the triggering turning or command attempt. The area is mobile with its focus.

Spectral Eyes (Wiz 2; Necromancy, Alteration)

Range: 10 yards/level
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 2
Duration: 1 turn/level
Area of Effect: The caster
Saving Throw: None

This spell establishes a visual link between the caster and a skeleton or zombie within the spell's range. The spell lets the caster see what the undead creature sees as if she or he were looking through the creature's eyes. If the caster has infravision, she or he sees what the creature sees with infravision as well. The spell also allows the wizard to order the undead creature (each command can be up to four words long). If the creature moves beyond the spell's range, then the spell ends immediately. If the skeleton is



under the direct, active control of another being, the commanding function of the spell automatically fails.

The material component of this spell is a carefully preserved eye.

3rd Level

Animate Zombies (Wiz 3; Necromancy)

Range: 10 yards+5 yards/level
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 3
Duration: Instantaneous
Area of Effect: 1 zombie/level, 10 feet/level
Saving Throw: None

This variation of the *animate dead* spell produces one properly prepared zombie for each experience level of the wizard. The wizard must immerse the corpses in a special mineral salt bath for one full turn before casting the spell. Once the corpses have been properly treated, the wizard can animate them using *animate zombies* at any time within the next 24 hours.

Only the bodies of humans, demihumans, and humanoids of 1 Hit Die or less can be animated by this spell. The experience levels of the slain are ignored—the newly animated zombies are treated exactly as the zombies described in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* tome. They obey the verbal commands of the animating wizard and remain animated until destroyed in combat or turned by a priest. The magic cannot be dispelled.

The material component for this spell is a drop of blood and a pinch of bone powder or a shard of bone, plus a bath of special salts, which costs at least 200 gp to produce. The bath can accommodate up to 10 man-sized corpses, one at a time, before it is exhausted. The wizard can create a bath large enough to soak two corpses at once for 400 gp, three for 600 gp, and so on.

Charmthwart (Wiz 3; Abjuration, Metamagic)

Range: 0
Components: S
Casting Time: 3
Duration: 1 round/level
Area of Effect: The caster
Saving Throw: None

This magic (an experiment crafted by Sammaster during his early training) protects its caster against enchantment/charm magic. The caster receives a normal saving throw vs. spell against all enchantment/charm spells that normally allow no saving throw and a +3 bonus on saving throws against enchantment/charm spells that do allow a saving throw.

A faint, high-pitched, continuous singing sound surrounds the head of a being protected by *charmthwart*. The sound is audible 20 feet away in quiet conditions and about 10 feet away in conditions of average or normal noise. *Charmthwart* can be ended instantly before its expiration by the silent will of the caster.

Ghastly Hands (Wiz 3; Necromancy)

Range: 0
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 3
Duration: 2 rounds/level
Area of Effect: The caster
Saving Throw: None

When this spell is cast, the flesh of the wizard's hands changes to resemble the flesh of a ghast. Those within 10 feet of the wizard smell a sickening stench; if they have met ghouls before, they can recognize the stench as being similar to the nauseating odor given off by those beasts, though it has no other adverse effect.

Any human or demihuman (including elves) touched by the wizard must make a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation or be paralyzed for 4+1d6 rounds. Only one creature can be touched per round, and the wizard must make a successful attack roll to do so. The wizard can end the spell at will (but not the paralyzation, which runs its course).

Putrefaction (Wiz 3; Alteration)

Range: 10 yards/level
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 3
Duration: Instantaneous
Area of Effect: 15-foot radius
Saving Throw: Special

This vile spell spoils all food and water in the area of effect. Magical potions and holy water may be ruined: Roll 1d20 for each potion or container of holy water in the area; a roll of 8 or more (that is, the saving throw of a 12th-level wizard) leaves the fluid unaffected.

In addition, all creatures in the area of effect suffer 1d4 points of damage and must make a successful saving throw vs. poison. Those who fail suffer an additional 1d4 points of damage and are 25% likely to contract a rotting disease that will prove fatal in 1d6 months. For each month the rot progresses, an afflicted creature loses 2 points of Charisma permanently. Unlike *mummy rot*, this disease does not affect the curing of wounds.

The material component of this spell is a bit of rotten meat.

Ray of Paralysis (Wiz 3; Necromancy)

Range: 20 yards+5 yards/level
Component: V, S
Casting Time: 3
Duration: Instantaneous
Area of Effect: 1 creature
Saving Throw: Special

This spell projects a green, pencil-thin ray of enervating energy at the subject. The target creature is allowed a saving throw vs. breath weapon (Dexterity defensive adjustment bonuses or penalties apply) to dodge the narrow beam altogether; if the creature dodges the ray, another



creature standing behind it in a direct line might be struck at the DM's discretion.

A creature struck by the *ray of paralysis* is paralyzed for 3d4 rounds. A *remove paralysis* spell or a successful *dispel magic* can negate the paralysis effect before its time runs out.

Undead Lieutenancy (Wiz 3; Necromancy)

Range: 60 yards
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 3
Duration: 1 round/level
Area of Effect: 1 undead creature
Saving Throw: None

This spell allows the organization of lesser undead into coordinated groups by the caster. The undead lieutenant must be of at least low Intelligence. Upon receiving the spell, it is immediately treated as a leader by the lesser undead (that is, undead creatures with fewer Hit Dice than the undead lieutenant possesses). The lesser undead follow the orders of the lieutenant for the duration of the spell. The lesser undead must be either created by, controlled by, or in league with the caster.

Further, if the lieutenant is within 60 feet of the lesser undead, such followers are not affected by priestly turning or commanding unless the undead lieutenant is also affected.

If two undead creatures serving the same master and affected by this spell are in the same area, the most powerful one becomes the superior lieutenant. Power is determined in order of Hit Dice, then hit points; the caster must resolve ties. Should the more powerful lieutenant be incapacitated, the lesser lieutenant takes over.

If undead lieutenants of different casters are operating in the same area, they will cooperate or not, as their masters devise; however, unless direct subordination of commands is arranged, each undead lieutenant affects only the lesser undead directly under its own command.

The caster can end this spell instantly with a word.

Undead Summoning I

(Wiz 3; Necromancy, Conjunction/Summoning)

Range: 30 yards
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 3
Duration: 2 rounds+1 round/level
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

Within one round of completing this spell, the wizard conjures 3d4 skeletons or 3d4 animal skeletons (50% chance of each) to a point within the spell's range. The undead creatures attack the caster's enemies to the best of their ability until she or he commands the attack to cease, the spell duration expires, or they are defeated or turned. The undead summoned by this spell vanish when slain. If no enemy is present for the undead to engage, they follow any other commands or undertake simple tasks as the wizard directs.

The material component is a bit of bone taken from a ghoul, wight, or ghast.

Undead Torch (Wiz 3; Evocation, Necromancy)

Range: 20 yards
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 3
Duration: 9 rounds
Area of Effect: One corporeal undead creature
Saving Throw: None

This spell causes any one corporeal undead creature of the caster's choice to blaze with cold blue flames (similar in appearance to those caused by the "chill shield" effect of a *fire shield* spell). The spell is primarily used to augment the damage done by a skeleton or zombie undead servitor or to impress hostile intruders. The undead creature need not be a willing spell recipient, but it is unharmed by the flames, which also have no effect on nonliving material such as clothing worn by the undead, scrolls or other paper it may be holding, and so on.

The cold flames created by this spell sear only living flesh and deal 2d4 points of damage per contact (or per round of continuous contact). Their damage is added to any harm done by the undead creature in its usual attacks on living creatures. This spell cannot be cast on noncorporeal undead creatures, and corporeal creatures that transform themselves or are transformed into a noncorporeal state cause the spell to collapse (expire) in a pinwheel of fading, dying flames. The flames of this spell never harm undead creatures.

The spell's material component is a living or dried (dead) firefly or glow worm.

4th Level

Empower Skeleton (Wiz 4; Necromancy)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 turn
Duration: Until activated
Area of Effect: One undead skeleton
Saving Throw: None

This magic imbues a skeleton (which must already be undead, though it need not be under the control of the caster) with the ability to cast a single 1st- to 3rd-level wizard spell when specific conditions outlined by the caster during bestowal of the empowerment are met. Years may pass before the conditions are fulfilled, or they may be met at once. (Careless casters have been attacked by their own spells because their presence fulfilled the conditions they set!) The skeleton only unleashes the chosen spell once before the empowerment is discharged. In situations when it is unclear if the conditions have been met, the skeleton does not launch the magic.

The spell to be unleashed by the skeleton must be cast by the caster of the empowerment on the round immediately after the *empower skeleton* spell is cast. The caster need not be touching the skeleton during this second spellcasting, but



must be able to see it. This second spell vanishes without apparent effect into the skeleton to be launched later when its casting conditions are met. It operates as if cast by the caster and strikes at a random target if more than one is present and a valid target when the casting conditions are met. The wizard loses the spell slot of the imbued spell until the skeleton casts it or is destroyed. Multiple *empower skeleton* spells cannot be cast on the same skeleton.

The material component of this spell is a handful of ashes from a scroll that was burned while it still bore at least one intact wizard or priest spell.

Forcefend (Wiz 4; Alteration, Metamagic)

Range: 30 yards
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 4
Duration: 1 round
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: Special

This spell cloaks its caster with a temporary protection against all hostile spells and magical item discharges that have a specific target—when the intended target is the caster. A *forcefend* enables the caster to redirect all such magics at another suitable target within spell range. The new target can never be the original source of the attack (for example, this spell does not allow direct reflection of spell attacks) and cannot be a target not valid under the terms of the spell attack. The new target is allowed a saving throw vs. spell; if failed, the magical attack takes its full effect on the new target rather than on the *forcefend* caster.

If the new target's saving throw succeeds, the magical attack rebounds to strike at any valid target (except the original source and the *forcefend* caster) within 30 yards of the intended new target. This secondary target cannot be chosen by the *forcefend* caster, and if more than one valid target exists, the actual target affected is chosen randomly.

The secondary target is allowed a normal saving throw vs. spell; if failed, the secondary target takes the full brunt of the original attack. If the secondary target's saving throw also succeeds, the spell attack fades harmlessly away and is lost, harming nothing and no one.

A *forcefend* protects its caster against all hostile magics during its round of existence; the caster can redirect multiple attacks against various targets without penalty for "being so busy." Any spellcasting on the part of the *forcefend* caster while the *forcefend* is in effect instantly negates it, but the caster can employ magical items and undertake strenuous or demanding physical activities, including combat, climbing, and readying material components for future magics.

Gloom (Wiz 4; Alteration)

Range: 60 yards+10 yards/level
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 4
Duration: 1 turn/level
Area of Effect: 120-foot radius
Saving Throw: None

This spell weakens light sources of any kind in the area of effect. Light equal to daylight in brightness or intensity (including *continual light*) is reduced to a deep twilight gloom. Torches and magical weapons illuminate only a 5-foot radius, and lamps, lanterns, and other magical light sources illuminate only a 10-foot radius. The spell covers a 120-foot radius and can be made mobile if cast on an object.

Light-based combat penalties for creatures of darkness are negated within the area of effect, and monsters that cannot abide the touch of daylight (vampires, for instance) are fully capable of acting under the veil of gloom. Light-based spells and combat effects are halved in effect when conducted under the effects of *gloom*; for example, a *sunburst* from a *wand of illumination* is reduced from 6d6 points of damage to 3d6 points of damage against undead.

The material component for this spell is a special incense prepared by the caster.

Protection From Deathbane, 10-foot Radius (Wiz 4; Necromancy)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 4
Duration: 2 rounds/level
Area of Effect: 10-foot radius around creature touched
Saving Throw: None

This spell is similar to the 2nd-level *protection from deathbane* except for the increased area of effect. All undead creatures within the area are protected from the effects of dweomers that are particularly baneful to undead creatures. The protected undead creatures receive two benefits: First, they have a +2 bonus to saving throws against spells that have special effects against undead creatures. Furthermore, they receive a saving throw if nonundead creatures have one, even if the effect normally forbids one to undead creatures. Second, the protection negates any bonus damage specifically affecting undead from any source (spell, item, etc.). For example, while the protection is not effective against the disintegration power of a *mace of disruption*, it is effective against the damage bonuses of that weapon. This protection lasts for 2 rounds per level of the caster.

The spell is centered on and moves with the creature touched, who may be the caster or any undead creature. If cast on a creature too large to fit in the area of effect, the spell operates as a *protection from deathbane* for that creature only.

The material component is ash sprinkled in a 20-foot-diameter circle.

Rary's Spell Enhancer (Wiz 4; Alteration, Metamagic)

Range: Special
Components: V
Casting Time: Special
Duration: Special
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None



This one-word spell focuses and increases the effectiveness of a spell cast by the wizard. It sets up a special spell complex that allows the caster to cast two spells in the same round. The *spell enhancer* is cast first, followed immediately by the spell to be enhanced, during the same round. The enhanced spell strikes with greater power, resulting in a -2 penalty to all saving throws the spell requires.

Sammaster's Lash

(Wiz 4; Evocation, Necromancy)

Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 4
Duration: 9 rounds
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: Special

This spell brings into being a flying ribbon of yellow-white, crackling force that strikes at foes as the caster wills, launching one attack per round at THAC0 14 (regardless of its caster's THAC0). It is acrobatic and whisper-thin. It cannot be hit or affected by any known means except *dispel magic* or contact with any magical barrier created by a 5th or higher level spell, both of which destroy it. The lash seems attracted to such barriers and does not dodge around them unless it approaches its intended target from entirely the opposite direction from the location of a finite, small-surface-area barrier.

A victim struck by a *Sammaster's lash* is allowed a saving throw vs. spell. If it succeeds, the victim suffers 4d4 points of damage. If it fails, the victim suffers no direct physical damage, but is paralyzed for the entire round following contact with the lash. If the wielder of the lash uses it to strike a paralyzed victim again during that time (to extend the paralysis), another saving throw is allowed. (Damage might occur rather than more paralysis, regardless of the *lash-caster's* wishes.) In any case, the paralyzation caused by *Sammaster's lash* ends instantly if its victim is struck by a physical attack that causes damage.

The material components of this spell are three ghost hairs twisted together.

Spelltouch (Wiz 4; Enchantment, Metamagic)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 round
Duration: Special
Area of Effect: 1 item (of less weight and volume than the caster)
Saving Throw: None

This spell, cast on a nonliving item, allows any spell of 3rd level or less cast on it in the following round (not necessarily by the caster) to be stored and remain dormant until the item touches a target creature. The caster of the *spell-touch* can specify what race, sex, and type (undead, summoned, living, avian, etc.) of creature will trigger or be affected by the second spell. The second spell (which need not be known to or be castable by the caster of the *spell-*

touch) is unleashed by contact between the item and the triggering creature. Any saving throws allowed by the stored spell are resolved normally.

For example, a gem set into a throne could unleash a *fireball* spell when triggered by the touch of a guard. ("A living human male or female" can be specified, but not "a wizard" or "the king.")

During casting, the caster can designate a single type of being as immune to the spell. An immune being does not trigger the stored spell and, if in the unleashed spell's area of effect, receives a +4 bonus to any saving throw the unleashed spell allows.

The material components of this spell are a pinch of powdered gemstone (of 200 gp value per level of the stored spell) and a pinch of the ash left by any fire created or augmented by a spell combined with a drop of water and touched to the item during the casting. The components of the stored spell are also required. The item must be purified and magically prepared for the casting, a process that requires a full week per level of the stored spell.

Undead Summoning II

(Wiz 4; Necromancy, Conjuraction/Summoning)

Range: 40 yards
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 4
Duration: 3 rounds+1 round/level
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

An improvement of the 3rd-level spell *undead summoning I*, this spell resembles its weaker relation except that *undead summoning II* conjures 3d4 zombies (75% chance) or 2d3 heucavas (25% chance). The monsters attack the caster's enemies to the best of their ability until the caster commands the attack to cease, the spell duration expires, or the monsters are defeated or turned. The undead summoned by this spell vanish when slain. If no enemy is present for the undead to engage, they follow any other commands or undertake simple tasks as the casting wizard directs.

The material component is a bit of bone taken from a wight, ghost, or mummy.

5th Level

Deathmaster's Vial (Wiz 5; Necromancy)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 5
Duration: Special
Area of Effect: 1 or more vials
Saving Throw: None

This spell activates an evil fluid that has been sealed in a specially prepared vial. The activated concoction can be hurled as a grenadelike missile. A direct hit inflicts 2d8+3 points of rotting damage. A miss within 5 feet inflicts 1d4+1 points of rotting damage.

The casting activates one vial per 3 levels of the caster (round down, minimum of one), up to a total of five vials at



15th level. The vials must be used within two hours of exposure to direct sunlight, but they last for 2d10 days if kept in darkness. Exposing the liquid to the air after activation destroys it within a round. The vials radiate evil.

The material component of the spell is the base fluid, which is made from boiling the remains of a ghoul or ghost for 24 hours and adding various noxious substances worth about 300 gp. This yields enough liquid to fill 6 small vials (like those used to carry holy/unholy water).

Fear Aura (Wiz 5; Abjuration)

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 5
Duration: 2 rounds/level
Area of Effect: 60-foot radius
Saving Throw: Special

While this spell is in effect, the mere sight of the caster causes all creatures of 2 Hit Dice or less within the area of effect to flee in terror.

Creatures with more than 2 Hit Dice but fewer Hit Dice than the caster's level must succeed at a saving throw vs. spell at a -2 penalty or be immobilized, unable to move or act. Creatures immobilized by terror can try to ward off blows, suffering a -1 penalty to Armor Class; they cannot attack. Each round, an immobilized creature can try a new saving throw without penalty to shake off the spell's effect and regain its freedom of action.

Creatures whose levels or Hit Dice equal or exceed the caster's are unaffected, as are mindless creatures or creatures immune to fear.

The material component is cloth from a lich's shroud.

Pierce Magic Resistance

(Wiz 5; Alteration, Metamagic)

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 5
Duration: Special
Area of Effect: 1 spell
Saving Throw: None

Pierce magic resistance makes another spell more potent: It pierces magic resistance and some spells that shield a target from spells. Casting *pierce magic resistance* affects only the spell a wizard casts in the next round. If the target of the second spell has magic resistance, its magic resistance check is rolled twice. Unless both checks succeed, the spell pierces the creature's magic resistance.

For example, if Therdillion the Invoker casts *pierce magic resistance* and then a *disintegrate* spell at a creature with 50% magic resistance, the DM rolls the resistance twice to see if it proves effective. Unless both resistance rolls succeed, the spell gets through, forcing the creature to make a saving throw against the *disintegration* spell. If the saving throw is failed, the creature is disintegrated.

The *pierce magic resistance* spell has a 50% chance of instantly dispelling protections against spells of 5th level or

less, including *shield*, *gaze reflection*, *minor globe of invulnerability*, *protection from cantrips*, *protection from weapons* (any), *protection from magic* (any), as well as any *wall* spell within these limits, including *wall of force*.

Nonmetallic protective charms and amulets that add +2 or less to saving throws vs. spell must make an item saving throw vs. disintegration or shatter after the saving creature's saving throw is resolved.

The material component is a small iron spike or knife.

Skeletal Spellcraft (Wiz 5; Necromancy)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 round
Duration: Until activated
Area of Effect: One skeleton
Saving Throw: None

A more powerful version of the *empower skeleton* spell, this magic imbues a skeleton (which must already be undead, though it need not be under the control of the caster) with the ability to cast a spell when specific conditions outlined by the caster during bestowal of the spellcraft are met. (Note that sloppy casters have been attacked by their own spells when their presence fulfilled conditions they set.) The skeleton can launch a specific wizard spell of 1st to 3rd level once. It does not choose the best opportunity for doing so, but unleashes the spell on the first round in which its triggering conditions are met.

The spell to be unleashed by the skeleton must be cast on or at the skeleton by any wizard on the round immediately after the *skeletal spellcraft* spell is cast. This second spell vanishes without apparent effect (even if the wizard launching it intended it to be an attack on the skeleton) into the skeleton, to be launched later when its casting conditions are met. (If more than one eligible spell strikes a skeleton in the round after *skeletal spellcraft* has been applied, randomly select which one the skeleton is empowered to unleash.)

The trapped spell operates as if cast by the spell's original caster when activated, and it launches itself at a random target if more than one is present as a valid target when the casting conditions are met. In situations when it is unclear if the conditions have been met, the skeleton does not launch the magic. (Note that a skeleton governed by *skeletal spellcraft* cannot be fooled by illusions in matters pertaining to its triggering conditions.) Multiple *skeletal spellcraft* spells cannot be applied to the same skeleton, though a single *empower skeleton* and a *skeletal spellcraft* can be cast on the same skeleton.

The material component of this spell is a handful of ashes from a scroll that was burned while it still bore at least one intact wizard or priest spell of 4th level or greater. The requirement for this material component cannot be eliminated by any means, including spells or items normally engineered to allow the casting of other spells with no material components. (If Sammaster never figured out a way to get around this, how likely is any subsequent wizard to succeed?)



Rary's Superior Spell Enhancer

(Wiz 5; Alteration, Metamagic)

Range: Special
Components: V
Casting Time: Special
Duration: Special
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

This spell enhancer increases the amount of damage caused by a spell cast by the wizard. It sets up a special spell complex that allows the caster to cast two spells in the same round. The one-word *spell enhancer* is cast first, followed by the attack spell to be enhanced. When the attack spell is launched, all saving throws against the spell are made at a -1 penalty. The spell inflicts an additional point of damage per die of damage of the spell, so a *fireball* inflicts 1d6+1 points of damage per die. When a *magic missile* is cast after the spell enhancer, each missile inflicts 1d4+2 points of damage.

Thrice (Wiz 5; Alteration)

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 5
Duration: 2 rounds
Area of Effect: The caster
Saving Throw: None

This spell temporarily augments the effectiveness of its caster in physical combat such that for each physical attack launched by the caster (including attacks with enchanted weapons and attempts to deliver touch-effect spells), she or he receives three attack rolls. Only one attack is actually made, but the best roll result is used. For each successful caster attack, three damage rolls are made, and the best result (and only that result) is used. If target creatures are allowed saving throws against these attacks, three must be made, and the worst result used.

The material components of this spell are three samariskites (black opaque gemstones) of very similar size.

Undead Summoning III

(Wiz 5; Necromancy, Conjuration/Summoning)

Range: 50 yards
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 5
Duration: 4 rounds+1 round/level
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

The next spell in the series of undead summonings, this spell brings 2d4 ghouls (50% chance) or 2d4 monster zombies (50% chance) to the caster's aid. The monsters attack the caster's enemies to the best of their ability until the caster commands the attack to cease, the spell duration expires, or the monsters are defeated or turned. The undead summoned by this spell vanish when slain. If no enemy is present for the undead to engage, they follow any

other commands or undertake simple tasks as the wizard directs.

The material component is a bit of bone taken from a wight, ghastr, or mummy

6th Level

Dweomerburst (Wiz 6; Alteration, Metamagic)

Range: 10 yards
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 6
Duration: Instantaneous
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: Special

This spell causes any one magical barrier within range that was created by a spell of 5th level or less to explode in a burst of magical force. The barrier is destroyed, and the destructive energy of its blast streams directly away from the caster, dealing 1d6 hit points of damage per level of the spell that created it (save vs. spell to suffer only half damage) to all beings within 20 feet of the point of ignition.

All beings caught in the area affected by a *dweomerburst* must also make a saving throw vs. spell. Failure indicates they are stunned (reeling, unable to think coherently or perform any deliberate act) for 1d4 rounds and, if spellcasters, lose a randomly chosen spell from any spells currently memorized. Success indicates that they are merely stunned for 1 round.

The material component of this spell is a specially manufactured slender blown-glass spindle that is snapped between the caster's fingers during casting.

Rary's Urgent Utterance

(Wiz 6; Alteration, Metamagic)

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 turn
Duration: Up to 24 hours
Area of Effect: 1 spell
Saving Throw: None

This spell empowers the wizard to specially prepare another spell for quick casting in an emergency. *Urgent utterance* is cast first followed by the spell to be readied except for the last word of the spell. When the wizard needs to cast the readied spell, the caster need only utter the final word of the spell. The utterance of the final word has a casting time of 1, saving much time on most spells.

The readied spell stays in the caster's mind for only one day before it fades from memory. No more than two readied spells can be in the caster's mind at any time. Almost any spell of 6th level or less can be readied for quick casting, except the following: *find familiar*, *magic mirror*, *conjure elemental*, *contingency*, *enchant an item*, *ensnarement*, *guards and wards*, *legend lore*, *Tenser's transformation*, *limited wish*, *simulacrum*, *true name*, *binding*, *permanency*, *succor*, and *wish*.

The material component is a sapphire worth 1,000 gp, which is crushed when the spell is cast.



Shatterbone (Wiz 6; Necromancy)

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 6
Duration: Instantaneous
Area of Effect: 20-foot-wide×30-foot-long beam
Saving Throw: None

This spell brings into being a stationary beam lancing out from the caster's body in a direction (and angle, from vertical to horizontal) chosen by the caster. The beam is visible as a shimmering gray area. All undead creatures touched or enveloped in this beam who are least partially corporeal (solid) suffer 4d4 points of damage. Skeletons destroyed in this way burst into motes of dust rather than collapsing into bones that can be salvaged.

The material component of a *shatterbone* spell is a mineral crystal, cut gemstone, or a faceted "gem" made of glass through which the bright midday rays of the sun have shone.

Undead Summoning IV

(Wiz 6; Necromancy, Conjunction/Summoning)

Range: 60 yards
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 6
Duration: 5 rounds+1 round/level
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

Simply a more powerful version of the earlier undead summonings, this spell conjures 2d4 ghosts (40% chance), 2d4 shadows (20% chance), or 2d4 ju-ju zombies (40% chance) to the caster's aid. The monsters attack the caster's enemies to the best of their ability until the caster commands the attack to cease, the spell duration expires, or the monsters are defeated or turned. The undead summoned by this spell vanish when slain. If no enemy is present for the undead to engage, they follow any other commands or undertake simple tasks as the wizard directs.

The material component is a bit of bone taken from a mummy, vampire, or lich.

7th Level

Improved Thrice (Wiz 7; Alteration)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 7
Duration: 4 rounds
Area of Effect: Creature touched
Saving Throw: None

This spell temporarily augments the effectiveness of its caster or a single touched recipient creature in physical combat such that for each physical attack (including attacks with enchanted weapons and attempts to deliver touch-effect spells) launched by the spell recipient, she or he receives three attack rolls. Only one attack is actually made, but the best roll result is used. For each successful attack,

three damage rolls are made, and the best result (and only that result) is used. If target creatures are allowed saving throws against these attacks, three must be made, and the worst result used.

The material components of this spell are three tourmalines of very similar size worth at least 100 gp each.

Mordenkainen's Penultimate Cogitation

(Wiz 7; Alteration, Metamagic)

Range: 1 mile
Casting Time: 1
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous
Area of Effect: The caster
Saving Throw: None

This spell permits the wizard to call to mind one spell of 1st to 6th level from one of the caster's personal spellbooks, provided the appropriate spellbook is within one mile of the wizard. The spell must be one that the caster knows, as explained in the *Player's Handbook*. The spell cannot be called from a scroll or another wizard's spellbook. Only one spell can be called per casting of the *penultimate cogitation*. The called spell can be cast on any succeeding round as if it had been memorized after the prescribed amount of study and rest. A 10% chance exists that the called spell is magically erased from the wizard's spellbook upon the casting of this spell.

Persistence

(Wiz 7; Invocation/Evocation, Metamagic)

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 turn
Duration: 1 day/level
Area of Effect: The caster
Saving Throw: None

Related to both the *contingency* and *permanency* spells, *persistence* allows a wizard to cast a spell of 6th level or lower and then hold it until it is needed. There are two general uses for *persistence*: to use a personal spell effect as needed up to the maximum duration of the *persistence* itself, or to prepare an instantaneous spell and hold it ready until the caster wishes to use it. These are defined below.

Damaging or offensive spells that have a duration (for example, *flaming sphere* or *wall of fire*) cannot be made *persistent*. A wizard may have no more than one *persistence* spell active at any given time; if she or he girds a new spell while an old one is still *persistent*, the old spell is simply replaced by the new one.

Personal Effect: Any spell that augments the wizard's natural abilities— *detect magic*, *protection from evil*, *jump*, *infravision*, *fly*, *wraithform*, or other caster-affecting spells— can be made *persistent* by use of this spell. The wizard casts *persistence* and then immediately follows with the desired spell. Instead of taking effect immediately, the magic of the *persistence* holds the spell effect ready for use by a simple act of will. The wizard can then "turn on" or "turn off" the



girded spell as often as she or he likes over the course of the duration of the *persistence*. The duration of the girded spell only runs while the spell is active, so a 15th-level wizard who makes a *fly* spell *persistent* will be able to use 1d6+15 turns of flight (the normal duration of *fly*) over the next 15 days (the duration of the *persistence*) as he sees fit.

This is especially useful because it allows the wizard to cast the girded spell and the *persistence* and have the girded spell's effects available while she or he then memorizes another spell in place of the spell made *persistent*. It is also useful because the girded spell can be activated instantly by an act of will. The main difference between this spell and *contingency* is that a *persistent* spell can be invoked several times (up to the limit of its normal duration) while a *contingency* functions once only.

Held Spell: Spells that have an instantaneous effect, such as most attack spells and some movement spells like *teleport* or *dimension door*, can be rendered *persistent* as well. The held spell may be activated or discharged at any time during the duration of the *persistence*, but its magic is then exhausted as if it had been cast normally. This resembles the effect of a *contingency* spell, but the effect has no predefined conditions and simply occurs when the caster wills it to.

The material component of this spell is a crystal chalice of exquisite workmanship worth at least 2,000 gp.

Semipermanency (Wiz 7; Alteration, Metamagic)

Range: Special
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 round
Duration: Special
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

This spell affects the duration of certain other spells, making the duration significantly longer. To the casual observer, the effects may seem permanent, but in fact the duration is limited to some number of years based on the caster's level: Roll 1d20 and subtract the result from the caster's level to yield the duration of the spell in years; if the result is 0 or less, roll 1d12 instead to find the spell's duration in months. The DM should roll these duration dice and keep the results secret from the caster. Casting this spell has no effect on the caster's Constitution score.

The personal spells upon which a *semipermanency* spell is known to be effective are the same as those listed for the more powerful *permanency* spell. The wizard casts the desired spell upon himself or herself, then follows with the *semipermanency* spell. This application of *semipermanency* can be dispelled only by a wizard of greater level than the spellcaster was when she or he cast the spell. Affected spells include: *comprehend languages*, *detect evil*, *detect invisibility*, *detect magic*, *infravision*, *protection from cantrips*, *protection from evil*, *protection from normal missiles*, *read magic*, *tongues*, and *unseen servant*.

The *semipermanency* spell can be used to lengthen the duration of some spells affecting creatures, objects, or areas, as follows: *enlarge*, *fear*, *gust of wind*, *invisibility*, *magic mouth*, *prismatic sphere*, *stinking cloud*, *wall of fire*, *wall of ice*, and *web*.

Finally, the following spells can be cast upon objects or areas only and rendered semipermanent: *alarm*, *audible glamer*, *dancing lights*, *solid fog*, *wall of fire*, *distance distortion*, and *teleport*.

In applications other than those directed on the caster, this spell can be dispelled normally to negate its effects.

The DM may allow other selected spells to be made semipermanent. The selected spell must be researched anew, costing as much and taking as long as its original research. The DM must decide whether a specific spell can be made semipermanent. The *semipermanency* spell cannot be used in the process of manufacturing magical items.

The material components are a drop of dwarf's blood and a tiny metal anvil (worth 50 gp minimum).

Undead Summoning V

(Wiz 7; Necromancy, Conjuration/Summoning)

Range: 70 yards
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 7
Duration: 6 rounds+1 round/level
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

This spell resembles *monster summoning V*, except that it conjures 3d4 ghosts (40% chance), 2d3 giant skeletons (40% chance), or 1d3+1 banshees (20% chance) to the caster's aid. The monsters attack the caster's enemies to the best of their ability until the caster commands the attack to cease, the spell duration expires, or the monsters are defeated or turned. The undead summoned by this spell vanish when slain. If no enemy is present for the undead to engage, they follow any other commands or undertake simple tasks as the wizard directs.

The material component is a bit of bone taken from a mummy, vampire, or lich.

Zone Perilous (Wiz 7; Evocation, Necromancy)

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 7
Duration: 1 hour/level
Area of Effect: 60-foot radius sphere
Saving Throw: None

This spell creates a luminous gray sphere or zone in the air. It can be cast so as to pass or partially pass through the ground or solid objects such as walls; its functioning is unimpaired by the presence of such solid matter. Contact with any part of this area aids undead creatures and harms living creatures except for the caster, who is immune to the effects of his or her own *zone perilous*. Undead creatures regain 2 lost hit points for every round in which they make contact (or remain in continued contact) with a *zone perilous*. This benefit can never bestow extra hit points to undead creatures.

Living creatures suffer 1 hit point of damage and must roll a saving throw vs. spell at a -2 penalty for their every entry into or additional round of continued contact with a



zone perilous. If the saving throw fails, the living being suffers 1d4 points of additional damage, loses 1 point of Strength (which returns after two turns have passed), and feels a sensation of terrible cold. Living creatures whose Strength or hit points drop to 0 (zero) or less while in the gray sphere do not deteriorate further. They are held in stasis until the *zone* expires or they are removed from it. Healing magic of any sort cannot aid living creatures who are in a *zone perilous*; attempts to use such aids causes them to be wasted without effect.

The material components of a *zone perilous* spell are a drop of water, a fragment of bone that a shadow (the creature) has touched, and a hematite gemstone worth at least 25 gp.

8th Level

Skeletal Guard (Wiz 8; Evocation, Necromancy)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 round
Duration: 1 day/level to a maximum of 20 days
Area of Effect: The fingerbones
Saving Throw: None

This spell transforms a handful of human fingerbones into complete undead skeletons. One skeleton is created per fingerbone used in the spellcasting, to a maximum of eight. These undead are under the complete unbreakable control of the caster and respond to his or her silent mental orders. Other spellcasting on the part of the wizard does not disturb this control, and in fact the skeletons can readily be augmented or altered by additional spells cast later by the *skeletal guard* caster.

Skeletons remain within 60 feet of the caster. If forced beyond that distance (for instance, because the caster teleports beyond range), they become motionless until the caster moves within 60 feet once again, they are destroyed, or the spell expires.

The skeletons rise up from wherever the caster tossed the fingerbones during casting (so long as their resting places are within 60 feet) at the end of the round following casting, and they instantly respond to the caster's commands. (They stand motionless if none are given.) They have all of the properties of undead human skeletons as described in the MONSTROUS MANUAL tome except that they are turned as "special" creatures. They melt away into dust when the *skeletal guard* spell expires.

The material components of this spell are up to eight intact human fingerbones (not necessarily from the same skeleton).

Spellcaster (Wiz 8; Enchantment, Metamagic)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 turn
Duration: Permanent
Area of Effect: 1 object
Saving Throw: None

Using this spell, a wizard imbues a stationary object with the ability to store, then later repeatedly cast, another spell. (Gems and statues are common receptacles for this spell.) The object to be enchanted must be of the finest quality, with a cost in excess of 10,000 gp. After the object has been enchanted, a spell is cast into it. Thereafter, the item casts the second spell, with normal effects centering on or originating from the item, at intervals of 1 to 10 rounds. The interval is determined when the item is enchanted; it cannot be changed.

Any spell of up to 3rd level, except *dispel magic*, can be used as the repeating spell. A successful *dispel magic* can affect either the *spellcaster* spell or the repeating spell; elimination of either renders the item useless. Moving the item also breaks the enchantment. Breaking the enchantment does not destroy the formerly enchanted object.

The material component of this spell is a hinge formed of platinum worth at least 500 gp.

Thrice Supreme (Wiz 8; Alteration)

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 8
Duration: 4 rounds
Area of Effect: The caster
Saving Throw: None

This spell temporarily augments the effectiveness of its caster in launching both physical and spell attacks. Each such attack is determined using the best result of three attack rolls (if such apply). In like manner, three rolls are made for duration and damage (if applicable), and the best is used. If target creatures are allowed saving throws against these attacks, three must be made and the worst results used.

The material components of this spell are three black sapphires of very similar size worth at least 250 gp each.

Undead Aides (Wiz 8; Necromancy)

Range: 10 yards
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 8
Duration: Permanent
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

When a wizard casts this spell, she or he imbues animated skeletons and zombies with limited Intelligence. The spell gives these undead the ability to speak in order to answer questions, respond to certain situations, shout warnings if under attack, or make introductions. This spell affects a maximum of one skeleton or zombie for each experience level of the caster, though the exact number of undead affected depends upon the number of tasks that each servant is to perform. For example, a 30th-level wizard can affect 30 undead creatures, each able to perform one task—or one undead servant that could perform 30 different tasks.

A task can be as simple as opening a door when visitors arrive or as complex as cooking a specific dish, each task taking no more than an hour to perform. The tasks are



short routines that are performed either daily, when a certain situation arises, or when the proper commands are given. The undead aides have low Intelligence for the purpose of determining what they know and how they will react. They retain their immunities to spells such as *charm*, *hold*, *sleep*, and so on.

It takes one turn for this spell to affect each creature after it is cast. Once the spell is cast, the undead servants need no monitoring except for any commands required to start specific tasks.

The material components are human bone fragments and a dragon's brain.

Undead Summoning VI

(Wiz 8; Necromancy, Conjunction/Summoning)

Range: 80 yards
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 8
Duration: 7 rounds+1 round/level
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

This spell summons 1d3+1 mummies (40% chance), 1d4+1 wraiths (40% chance), or 2d4 wights (20% chance) to the caster's aid. The monsters attack the caster's enemies to the best of their ability until the caster commands the attack to cease, the spell duration expires, or the monsters are defeated or turned. The undead summoned by this spell vanish when slain. If no enemy is present for the undead to engage, they follow any other commands or undertake simple tasks as the wizard directs.

The material component is a bit of bone taken from a vampire or lich.

Unlife (Wiz 8; Necromancy)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 8
Area of Effect: One humanoid creature
Saving Throw: Neg.

Used only by evil necromancer specialist wizards, this spell enables the caster to transform a single humanoid victim into an undead creature under the caster's control. The caster touches the subject, who must then save vs. death magic. If the saving throw fails, the subject instantly dies and is transformed into an undead creature under the control of the caster.

The exact type of undead created depends upon the level of the victim. Individuals of 1st-3rd level (or 1-3 HD) become skeletons (50%) or zombies (50%). Those of 4th-6th level (or 4-6 HD) become ghouls, those of 7th-8th level become wights (or 7-8 HD), and those of 9th level or higher (9+ HD) become wraiths.

Using this spell, the caster can control a number of undead creatures equal to his level.

The material component of this spell is dirt from a freshly dug grave.

9th Level

Absorption

(Wiz 9; Abjuration, Evocation, Metamagic)

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 9
Duration: 5 rounds/level
Area of Effect: The caster
Saving Throw: None

This spell enables the caster to absorb and redirect up to 10 spell levels of magical energy. The incoming spell is nullified, and the energy is stored for later use. Any type of spell can be absorbed, except for the following: area spells not targeted directly at the caster, touch attack spells, and the effects of magical devices. Priest spells, any spell scroll, and any spell-like ability use can be absorbed (provided it does not duplicate the functions of one of the forbidden types of spells).

At any time during the spell's duration, the caster can expend stored energy to cast a currently memorized spell without wiping it from memory. This effect has a casting time of 1. For example, a wizard absorbing a *feeblemind* spell (5th level) releases a *lightning bolt* (3rd level), has two levels of energy available, and can absorb five more levels of spell energy before the capacity of the spell is completely used. Unused energy and storage capacity are lost when the spell ends.

If an incoming spell exceeds the remaining capacity of the *absorption* spell, rather than absorbing it the caster gains a +2 bonus to his or her saving throw for each incoming spell level that is absorbed, even against spells that normally allow no saving throw. A roll of 1 always fails, regardless of the total of the modifiers.

The caster can voluntarily suppress the *absorption* for a round in order to receive beneficial spells but cannot absorb hostile spells in that round.

The material component of this spell is an amulet worth at least 1,000 gp that must be kept on the caster's person for duration of the spell. The amulet glows when spell energy is stored, and disintegrates at the end of the spell.

Algarth's Embattlement

(Wiz 9; Alteration, Metamagic)

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 9
Duration: 1 day/level
Area of Effect: The caster
Saving Throw: None

This infamous spell is sometimes called the *box of spells*. It is one of very few known magics that allow a caster to unleash more than one spell in a round. After the spell is cast, the wizard can cast up to six additional spells (each one in the usual fashion, requiring normal material components and the like) and store them, unreleased, as part of *Algarth's embattlement*. Stored spells are still memorized and prevent the caster from memorizing other spells in



their place. For each spell stored, the caster loses 1d4 hit points that cannot be regained until the stored spell is cast. (At that time, the damage can be restored by healing or rest; the hit points do not return automatically.)

Spells of any level that the wizard can cast can be stored. They can be unleashed by silent act of will at any time at a maximum speed of two spells per round. No other being can provide spells for the *embattlement* to store. Note that the caster must be conscious, and for certain spells must be able to see a target, but need not speak, move, or employ material components to enact stored spells.

The spells stored in an *embattlement* cannot be released or ruined by any magic short of *Mordenkainen's disjunction*. They persist even beyond the death of the caster, who may later rise as an undead being able to unleash them! If the caster outlives the spell duration without casting all of the spells, however, unused ones are lost.

The material components of *Algarth's embattlement* are four drops of water and a gem of not less than 4,000 gp value.

Combine

(Wiz 9; Invocation/Evocation, Metamagic)

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 9
Duration: Up to 1 turn
Area of Effect: The caster
Saving Throw: None

Combine allows the caster to meld two other currently memorized spells together so that they can be cast simultaneously with joined effects. The two spells cannot exceed more than seven total spell levels, so a 3rd- and 4th-level spell could be combined, or a 5th- and 2nd-level spell, or any other combination that falls within these limits. The spells remain linked in the caster's mind for up to one full turn. If the combined form is not cast in this time, the linked spells automatically dissociate from each other, and the *combine* spell is wasted.

When the paired spells are actually cast, the most restrictive casting time, range, area of effect, etc., are used. For example, if *enervation* and *slow* are combined, the joint spell would only affect a single creature, because *enervation* only strikes one target. The casting time would be 4 and the range would be 10 yards/level due to *enervation's* characteristics, but the duration would be based on *slow* and would only be 3 rounds plus 1 round/level.

The material component is a small pair of golden rings.

Death Ward (Wiz 9; Abjuration, Necromancy)

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 turn
Duration: Until twice the caster's level in HD are affected
Area of Effect: 1 doorway, portal, or small object
Saving Throw: Neg.

By covering a doorway with the most forbidden and lethal of necromantic runes, a wizard can protect a small portal so that any creature that tries to pass through the warded area without first speaking a word of command is immediately subjected to a modified *death spell*. The ward can be cast on an item (usually a spellbook or phylactery) or on a tunnel or cave entrance no larger than 30 feet in diameter.

Despite its lethality, this is not a subtle warding. The protected area or object is literally covered with intricate arcane runes and symbols at the time of casting. These glyphs may flash ominously with pale red or blue light when approached within 10 feet. The entire area radiates a magical aura of lethal necromancy.

A single application of this spell can kill up to twice as many Hit Dice or levels of creatures as the wizard who cast the spell has levels of experience (thus a 20th-level wizard can slay up to 40 levels with a single *death ward*). Each creature passing through the ward is entitled to a saving throw vs. death magic with a -4 penalty; if successful, the individual survives and the ward loses none of its lethality. However, those who fail their saves are immediately slain (as per a *death spell*) and their levels or Hit Dice are subtracted from the potency of the ward. Those with greater Hit Dice than the current power of the *death ward* are unaffected by the spell.

For example, an 18th-level lich has cast *death ward* (which can slay up to 36 levels) on the entrance to her inner sanctum. A party of four characters, each 15th level, enter her lair and foolishly traverse the warding. The first member fails his save and perishes, reducing the ward's effectiveness to 21 levels. The second character makes her save and thus escapes any ill effects (the ward remains unaffected, however). The third character fails the save and dies also, reducing the ward to 6 levels of potency. The fourth 15th-level character has too many levels of experience to be affected by the weakened ward, which remains in effect until drained by a less powerful being.

Provided that she or he is on the same plane of existence, the caster is immediately made aware if the *death ward* has been triggered. By concentrating, the wizard who cast the ward can determine its current level of lethality, regardless of distance.

This terrible spell is a closely held secret, guarded jealously by the most powerful and black-hearted of necromancers and liches. It was originally designed by liches, as they can easily sustain the rigors of casting such a spell.

Mortal wizards who employ this powerful spell have a 25% chance of insanity (as per the *contact other plane* spell and of permanent duration unless cured by a *heal* spell or other magic), permanent paralysis (via a stroke), or suffering a terminal illness (as per the *cause disease* spell) as adjudicated by the DM. The danger is reduced by 5% for every point by which the mortal wizard's Intelligence exceeds 18, though this chance never drops below 5%. Liches and other undead casters are completely immune to these dangers. It is rumored that certain ancient, evil dragons have developed an even more potent version of this spell that they can employ in their lairs with impunity.



The material component is a magical ink fabricated exclusively for this spell. The list of the ink's noxious ingredients is lengthy and complex, but it includes the venom of numerous poisonous animals and the acrid ichor of extraplanar fiends. The accumulation of these deadly components and the subsequent fabrication of the ink itself has the same chance as the actual casting of the spell of inflicting a baneful result.

While the inscription process (the actual casting) of the death ward takes only 1 turn, the fabrication process of the ink (once the proper ingredients have been assembled) takes 1-4 days. The ink also requires the dust of powdered peridots and garnets worth between 2,000-8,000 gp.

Pierce Any Shield (Wiz 9; Alteration, Metamagic)

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 round
Duration: 1 round
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

A more powerful version of *pierce magic resistance*, this spell is cast one round before an offensive spell. The next spell the *pierce any shield* spell's caster casts cannot then be stopped by any known means: magic resistance, spell turning or absorption, *anti-magic shell*, *counterspell immunity*, and so on. The only defense for the target of this spell is a saving throw—if the spell in question allows one. Even then, such rolls suffer a -5 penalty. The *pierce any resistance* spell does not prevent events that would normally disrupt the casting of the second spell.

The material component is a silver spike or knife.

Sammaster's Conjunction

(Wiz 9; Alteration, Metamagic)

Range: Special
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 round
Duration: Special
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

This powerful enchantment has two forms.

Combined: The combined form brings into being a 70-foot tall ovoid of glowing blue light directly in front of the caster. On the two rounds following his or her casting of the *conjunction*, the caster must cast two additional spells (both of the 7th level or less). If one of these additional spells is an evocation attack spell, the caster remains outside the ovoid and casts the spell into it; the caster moves into the ovoid to cast all other sorts of spells. Both spells are swallowed by the *conjunction*, which then fades from view, having been charged with the two spells. Thereafter, when the caster repeats the last word uttered in his or her casting of the *conjunction*, both of the stored spells instantly and simultaneously take effect, operating normally, with the *conjunction* empowering the caster to achieve normal control over both simultaneously. For example, the caster

could launch a *fireball* spell and at the same time teleport away using a *teleport* spell. This form of the spell allows the caster to memorize other spells in place of the two absorbed by the conjunction.

Conjoined: The conjoined form of the spell allows the caster to choose any two memorized spells she or he is carrying as *Sammaster's conjunction* is cast. On the next round or on any later round in the same turn, if the caster undertakes the normal casting process for the simpler, faster, or lower-level of the two spells selected, both take effect at once, with the caster's control over them as unimpaired as if she or he were devoting all due concentration to one spell alone. (For instance, casting *magic missile* would unleash both it and *fireball*, or casting *invisibility* would also hurl *lightning bolt* at one's foes.) These spells are discharged from memory in the usual way.

If the simpler spell is not cast during the turn, neither of the two selected spells takes effect, but the *conjunction* (and its link between the spells) is lost. The caster is free subsequently to use the memorized spells separately in the usual manner.

The material component is a hair originally from the head of one of the (current or past) Chosen of Mystra and a faceted clear quartz crystal.

Triad Gem (Wiz 9; Alteration, Metamagic)

Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 turn
Duration: Special
Area of Effect: One specially enchanted ruby
Saving Throw: None

This spell is used to store other spells in a specially prepared gemstone spell matrix. The spellcaster casts *triad gem* on a ruby, and in the turn immediate following its application, personally casts any three other spells of his or her choosing into the gem. Normal casting times, material components, and the like apply; obviously the caster must possess these magics, be able to cast them, and have them already memorized, and their combined casting times cannot exceed one turn.

A *triad gem* begins to evaporate after three days, silently and without spell effects occurring, losing one (randomly selected) spell on the fourth day and a spell each day thereafter until it vanishes entirely on the sixth day. If used before it fades away, any being can call forth the three spells within the gem by either breaking the gem (note that this can occur unintentionally) or holding it and uttering a secret word (set by the caster during the casting of *triad gem*). Only the caster can control the spells issuing from his or her *triad gem*; in all other cases, they come forth wildly, visiting their effects on random targets and areas.

If controlled by the caster, the spells stored in a *triad gem* take effect either all at once or in a succession chosen by the caster, one per round for three rounds. This order of issuance is determined by the caster at the time of the unleashing of the spells. The caster need only designate targets or precise effects by silent concentration (and thus can wield



these spells while bound, fighting, feigning slumber, or otherwise mentally or physically preoccupied).

The material component for this spell is a ruby of any size worth at least 500 gp upon which the caster has cast either an enchant an item spell or an *eternal flame* spell (as detailed in *Volo's Guide to All Things Magical*). The requirement for this material component cannot be eliminated by any means, including spells or items normally engineered to allow the casting of other spells with no material components, as the entire point of the spell is to enchant the stone.

Undead Summoning VII

(Wiz 9; Necromancy, Conjuraction/Summoning)

Range: 90 yards
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 9
Duration: 8 rounds+1 round/level
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

The most powerful version of the *undead summoning* spells, this spell conjures 1d3+1 spectres (50% chance), 1d3 vampires (40% chance), or 1 revenant (10% chance) to the caster's aid. The monsters attack the caster's enemies to the best of their ability until the caster commands the attack to cease, the spell duration expires, or the monsters are defeated or turned. If this spell happens to summon a revenant, the monster selects an opponent designated by the caster as its hated nemesis and attacks the selected victim single-mindedly. The undead creatures summoned by this spell vanish when slain. If no enemy is present for the undead to engage, they follow any other commands or undertake simple tasks as the wizard directs.

The material component is a bit of bone taken from a lich.

Magical Items

Detailed here are several of the Cult of the Dragon's commonly used magical items. Many of these items were created by Sammaster himself for use by his followers. If the DM determines a particular example of an item from this list was hand-crafted by the Mad Mage himself, she or he may increase its power level or add other, unique powers to that item.

From among the items listed in the DUNGEON MASTER® Guide, the Cult most often uses or seeks to gain the use of items that allow them to make up for their deficiency in priestly powers: *Potions of healing* and *periapts of wound closure* are both quite popular. Items that allow Cult members to imitate the abilities of their draconic idols, such as *wands of fire, frost, and lightning* and devices that allow flight are common. Cult members also look out for items (or create them, in rare cases) that their dracoliches or dragons desire or require. While the dragons and dracoliches are not likely to admit it, many of these items are defensive or warding in nature.

Amulet of Draconic Might

XP Value: 6,000

GP Value: 30,000

Amulets of draconic might are the secret keys to the Cult's surprising knack for convincing its dracolich allies to perform deeds for the humans of the Cult (most commonly attacking some Cult foe). Created secretly by Sammaster (a feat unknown even to Algashon) and detailed in a magical code inscribed only in the original now-lost *Tome of the Dragon*, these items work in conjunction with the *rings of dragons* detailed below. Six *amulets* were created, but no new ones can be made unless and until the original *Tome of the Dragon* is recovered.

An *amulet of draconic might* grants +1 bonuses to Armor Class and all saving throws when worn by any evil being. (Good and neutral beings gain no benefits from the use of an *amulet*.) When worn in conjunction with a *ring of dragons*, these bonuses increase to +2 (total) to Armor Class and all saving throws. Further, a wearer of both items is immune to all draconic *fear* (this includes dracolich *fear*) and gains a +5 bonus against the breath weapons of all evil dragons. This +5 saving throw bonus supersedes the +2 bonus mentioned above.

The true power of the *amulets*, though, is far more potent. When worn by an evil being who is also wearing a *ring of dragons* and who has been instructed in the use of both items, the wearer of an *amulet of draconic might* can command all dracoliches in a fashion somewhat similar to that of an evil priest commanding lesser undead. An intrinsic part of the Cult dracolich creation process links every dracolich so created to all *amulets*. The command ability draws upon this linkage and functions as the call ability detailed in the *ring of dragons* entry. It has unlimited range and only dracoliches and, when desired, evil dragons, can hear it. In addition, the *amulet-wearer* can specify only certain dracoliches or dragons to hear the command.

Those creatures that hear the command know the *amulet-wearer's* location and can home in on the command. (Dracoliches cannot ignore the command, but unique circumstances, as designated by the DM, could prevent them from hearing.) The command remains active for all designated dracoliches and dragons until the wearer wills it to end or the *amulet* is removed. However, unlike the call from a *ring of dragons*, any command given by use of an *amulet* to a Cult dracolich whose links to the *amulets* are intact (most dracoliches' links are) cannot be refused. The dracolich is aware that it is being controlled, but it cannot take any action to prevent it from carrying out its assigned task. Sammaster's magic is far too strong to be resisted by a creature essentially created by the Mad Mage.

After the commanded task is accomplished, the dracolich may desire to take out its rage upon the wearer of the *amulet* who commanded it, but no dracolich can attack an *amulet* wearer in any way. Further, if the wearer is canny enough to command the dracolich not to retaliate, the bone dragon can do little but fume in its lair or take out its rage upon other targets—unless of course the wearer has forbidden that course of action as well.

Living evil dragons, due to Sammaster's unparalleled knowledge and insight into their nature, are also suscepti-



ble to the command ability of an *amulet*, though less so than dracoliches. Living evil dragons are granted a saving throw against the command ability; any magic resistance the dragon possesses also applies. If the saving throw fails, the dragon is controlled as above. If the dragon resists, the beast is fully aware of what was just attempted and the location and identity of the being who made the attempt. (It is said that the use of this capability of the *amulets* is what caused the flight of dragons in 1356 DR.) For this reason and that of secrecy, the command ability is only rarely used, and only when bribery and coercion fail is the use of an *amulet* even considered on a living dragon.

Dragon's Tooth

XP Value: 100/HD

GP Value: 1,000/HD

Dragon's teeth are rare, but they are more commonly used by members of the Cult than any other group in the Realms. Some dragons die while in service to the Cult, and more fail to survive the conversion process to dracolich status. Cult wizards have a better use for a *dragon's tooth* than making an ale cup out of it. With the proper spells and materials, the tooth can be used to create "the children of the dragon."

A *dragon tooth* can be enchanted so that when planted in the ground and given a command word (usually "grow!"), the tooth sprouts an armed warrior of an Armor Class and alignment appropriate to the dragon from whose tooth it grew. Each dragonman also has special abilities unique to its type.

When discovered as part of a treasure trove, *dragon's teeth* may be found in collections of 1d20, usually contained in a leather bag. A single *dragon's tooth* is usually between 3

and 12 inches in length. Dungeon Masters may use the following table to determine the type of teeth found in Cult usage:

Roll	Dragon Type
01-20	Blue
21-40	Green
41-65	Black
66-90	White
91-00	Red

Other colors, such as yellow and brown dragon *dragon's teeth*, are possible but have never been encountered. (Good dragon's teeth are also possible to find, but not in the care of the Cult. See the *ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA* tomes under "Tooth, Dragon" for descriptions of their effects.) Sometimes (10% chance), a bag may contain a mixed assortment of teeth, the different types determined using the above percentile rolls. In such cases, the teeth might be color-coded or marked in some fashion that the player characters must puzzle out for themselves—or not.

Dragonmen either obey or attack the person who caused the teeth to grow, depending on the alignments involved. Dragonmen of an alignment opposite to that of the possessor of the teeth (such as lawful good vs. chaotic evil, or chaotic good vs. lawful evil) refuse to obey the owner of the *dragon's teeth* and attack at once.

If the owner's alignment either differs in only one respect from the dragonman's (lawful good vs. lawful evil, for example) or is neutral, then the dragonman must make a saving throw vs. spell to determine if it obeys the owner.





Failure indicates the warriors obey, albeit reluctantly and without enthusiasm. Daily saves are made to determine continued fealty. A successful save allows the dragonman to desert, and it may, if the opportunity is there, injure or discomfit the owner of the *tooth* in some way. Dragonmen of the same alignment as the possessor of the *teeth* are loyal to the death. (Dragonmen continue to “live” until killed.) Being magical constructs, they and all their apparel and items *disintegrate* when slain, with no possible chance of *resurrection* or saving.

To be worthy of enchantment, a dragon’s teeth must be in perfect condition—without chips, cracks, or splits due to age, careless handling, or extraction. A dragon, according to one source, has 64 teeth in its mouth normally. After being slain in combat, 2d8 teeth are usually damaged from fighting or lost during the beast’s death throes. Should Cultists (or adventurers) decide to pull the remainder of the teeth for sale to a wizard, then each remaining tooth must save as bone vs. crushing blow during the extraction. Failure to save means the tooth is damaged during extraction and is useless for enchantment.

Player character and Cult wizards who wish to create enchanted *dragon’s teeth* may use the following method to do so. After a tooth has been prepared for enchantment using the spell *enchant an item*, it is immersed in a crystal basin containing a broth composed of a mixture of the parent dragon’s blood and at least one of the following ingredients, according to the type of tooth being enchanted.

Dragon	Ingredient
Black	Black dragon acid, giant slug spittle, bombardier beetle glands, or large quantities of strong acid.
Blue	Several crushed electric eels, dust or gems from the body of a shocker, umpleby hair or skin, volt barbs, or the skeleton of a boggart.
Green	Powdered ghost bone, scent glands from several giant skunks, a large amount of wolverine musk, a large amount of uropygi (giant pedipalp) scent, vapor rat blood, retch plant juice, large amounts of fatty excretion of taer, or one cup of flumph spittle or of witherstench musk.
Red	Chimera blood, hell hound blood, salamander blood (one drop alone suffices), a pyrolisk eye, fire Drake blood, firenewt or fire toad blood.
White	Ice toad blood, hoar fox blood, ice lizard blood, or a frost man’s eye (the one covered by the patch).

After an appropriate ingredient is found and put into the basin, a low fire is kept burning under the basin, and the tooth is allowed to steep for one hour. The wizard must then cast a *limited wish* over the tooth and let it sit overnight in the mixture. Then the wizard may remove the tooth and perform an *identify* spell to determine if the enchantment was a success.

Some of the possible results of using teeth from each of the five major chromatic dragon types from the MONSTROUS MANUAL tome are described below. Each tooth can create a

fighter who possesses a level of fighting ability equal to half the number of Hit Dice the parent dragon had (round fractions up). Each warrior also has half the number of hit points that the parent dragon once had (again, round fractions up). The warrior makes all saving throws as a fighter or wizard of equal level to its Hit Dice (whichever is more advantageous). A dragonman is of the same sex as the parent dragon.

Black Dragon: An AC 3 warrior dressed in black chain mail with shield and armed with a black long sword appears. Chaotic evil in alignment, with an Intelligence of 10 and a Dexterity of 15, the warrior is immune to all acid-based attacks and can cast a *Melf’s acid arrow* spell once a day (1d4+1 damage from arrow, 2d4 damage from acid with saving throws applicable, +1 on attack rolls).

Blue Dragon: An AC 2 warrior accoutered in blue plate mail with shield and armed with a mace appears. Lawful evil in alignment, with an average Intelligence of 12, this warrior is immune to all electrical attacks and can perform a *shocking grasp* spell (1d8+3 damage) once a day.

Green Dragon: An AC 2 warrior dressed in scale mail covered over with green vestments and carrying a bow, a full quiver of 20 arrows, and a hand axe appears. This lawful evil warrior has an Intelligence of 11 and a Dexterity of 18 (+3 to attack rolls with missile weapons). He is immune to poison gas attacks and can cast a *stinking cloud* spell of two rounds duration once per day.

Red Dragon: An AC -1 warrior dressed in red plate mail with a shield and carrying a broad sword appears. Chaotic evil in alignment, this warrior has an Intelligence of 16 and a Dexterity of 17. He is immune to all fire- and heat-based attacks and can perform a *burning hands* spell once a day for 1d6+1 points of damage.

White Dragon: An AC 3 warrior dressed in white splint mail with shield and carrying a battle axe appears. This chaotic evil berserker warrior has an Intelligence of 8. In battle, there is a 50% chance he goes into a berserker rage and gains a +2 on attack and damage rolls for offensive attacks and a -2 penalty on all saving throws and Armor Class. He is immune to cold. Once per day, he can inflict 1d10 points of damage with his *icy stare* (save vs. spell for half damage), similar to the attack of a frost man.

Evil Dragon Armor

XP Value: 1,000 GP Value: 7,500

Another powerful magical item that can be constructed from a dead dragon is a potent suit of scale mail armor made from the dragon’s skin itself. In this way, say the Cultists who make use of such armor, the dragon that falls while in battle for the Cult (or which dies for any other reason the Cult can claim was for them) may continue to serve bringing about Sammaster’s dream. Although these suits of armor come from evil dragons, priests and fighters of all alignments may wear them.

To begin the process of making *evil dragon armor*, an evil dragon (white, black, red, blue, or green; yellow and brown armor are possible but have never been constructed) of at least adult age must be killed without the use of magic and preferably by means of repeated attacks with blunt weap-



ons. Even a single magical attack directed against a dragon, whether or not the spellcasting succeeds and whether or not the spell causes damage to the dragon, ruins the protective potential of the creature's hide and makes later attempts at enchantment ineffective. If the dragon is hit with edged weapons, there is a chance that the hide will be cut and marred to such an extent that it becomes unusable as armor. For each successful hit on the dragon with an edged weapon (regardless of the amount of damage done), add 5% to the chance of the hide being damaged beyond use. (Thus, if a dragon takes 20 hits from edged weapons, there is no chance that the hide can be used as armor.) If and when the dragon is killed, the chance that the hide is spoiled must be exceeded on a percentage die roll in order for the armor-making process to continue.

The hide must be removed with care, and at this juncture a very sharp edged weapon is essential to trim the hide as cleanly and efficiently as possible. The instrument must be able to be controlled with precision, which means it cannot be any larger than a standard dagger blade. If the character doing the skinning uses a normal (nonmagical) blade, there is a 30% chance that, despite his or her best efforts, the hide does not separate cleanly from the body and the resulting scraps of dragon skin are unusable as armor. If an enchanted blade is employed, the chance of failure at this step of the process decreases by 10% for each level of magical bonus of the instrument (by -10% for +1, -20% for +2, etc.); thus, with any blade of +3 or greater, successful skinning is assured.

Once the hide is removed and transported to civilization (assuming the dragon was not killed in the village square), the services of skilled armorers, leather-workers, and tailors must be employed to fashion the hide into armor. This process takes 1d10+20 days for each suit of armor, and prices for the needed services are three times the standard rate. Only one set of armor may be fashioned from the hide of a single dragon.

The resulting suit of armor is equivalent to normal scale mail in Armor Class (AC 6) and the amount of encumbering bulk it has. It weighs about 30 pounds, slightly lighter than the 40 pounds for normal scale mail. If the unenchanted armor is hit even once by an edged weapon, it cannot be enchanted into *evil dragon armor*.

Enchanting the armor must be done by a wizard of at least 16th level who will insist on generous payment in gold pieces or the promise and proof of some other benefit that might be offered. At least half the payment must be supplied in advance, with the rest due when the armor is delivered.

The wizard must first successfully cast *enchant an item* on the armor and then apply a second spell or procedure (which varies depending on the armor type) to act as a catalyst, triggering the armor's capability to resist a particular attack form. This second step must be applied or begun within 12 hours after the completion of *enchant an item*. If the enchanting process fails, either because the casting of *enchant an item* is unsuccessful or because the second spell is not applied within the required time, the wizard is under no obligation to make another attempt free of charge.

The second step in the process depends on the type (color) of the dragon hide used. To complete *white dragon armor*, an *ice storm* spell must be cast on the hide; for *black dragon armor*, the finished hide must be immersed in acid for 1d12+12 hours; to complete *green dragon armor*, a *stinking cloud* spell must be cast on (around) the hide; for *blue dragon armor*, a *shocking grasp* spell is needed, and for *red dragon armor*, *burning hands*. None of these spells or substances damage the armor when they are applied; their function is to activate the innate resistance in the hide that has already been "brought to the surface" by the *enchant an item* spell.

When the enchantment is complete, the *evil dragon armor* is equivalent to *scale mail +1*: Armor Class 5, weight 15 pounds. In addition, each colored armor type affords the wearer resistance or immunity to a particular attack form. Resistance includes these benefits: The wearer of the armor gains a +1 bonus on all saving throws against the specified attack form, and the wearer is unaffected by any attack of the specified type that does 6 points of damage or less in a round. In all cases, the wearer is entitled to a -1 modifier on each and every damage die rolled (with a minimum of 1 point of damage per die). If the application of this modifier reduces damage taken in a round to 6 points or less, the wearer takes no damage (as stipulated previously).

The special properties of each type are:

White Dragon Armor: Resistance against white dragon breath, winter wolf breath, *cone of cold* spells, and other attack forms involving cold, ice, or frost.

Black Dragon Armor: Resistance against black dragon breath, giant slug spittle, ankheg digestive acid, and other attack forms using acid or acidlike effects.

Green Dragon Armor: Resistance against green dragon breath, iron golem breath, *cloudkill* spells, and other attack forms using poisonous gases.

Blue Dragon Armor: Resistance against blue dragon breath, *lightning bolt* spells, a storm giant's lightning attack, and other sorts of natural and magical lightning or electricity.

Red Dragon Armor: Resistance against red dragon breath, *fireball* spells, and other attacks using heat or fire.

Ring of Dragons

XP Value: 750

GP Value: 4,000

This type of ring is known to be worn only by high-ranking members of the Cult, and they retain the secrets of their construction. These rings are usable by any intelligent being, regardless of race, class, or alignment. These rings appear to be normal brass rings, though some have been said to look like snakes or dragons biting their own tails when examined closely. There are about 70 *rings of dragons* currently in existence. They are activated by the will of the wearer, with the following effects:

- The wearer is empowered to verbally and telepathically communicate with any true dragon.
- The wearer can cast the illusion of a dragon once per day. This illusion must be within 60 feet of the wearer and has the appearance of and sounds like any dragon the wearer has personally seen. The illusion has no



physical substance and can in no way inflict any damage, even if believed. This illusion serves as a recognition symbol or as a diversion, if necessary.

- The wearer can issue a call to all evil dragons and Cult dracoliches. This call has unlimited range, but only evil dragons (and all dracoliches) can hear the call. Those creatures that do hear the call know the ring-wearer's location and can home in on the call if they choose to respond to the call.

The call remains active for all interested dragons and dracoliches until the wearer wills it to end or the *ring* is removed from the wearer's hand. Evil dragons and dracoliches can choose to ignore this *ring's* call; they are under no compulsion to respond.

Tome of the Dragon

Power has its own beauty. Perhaps the most beautiful combination of grace and might among the mortal creatures of Toril is a dragon.

—Sammaster the Mad, Tome of the Dragon



The original *Tome of the Dragon* contains all the theories, experiments, and conclusions reached by Sammaster regarding dragons, dracoliches, their ultimate destiny as rulers of all of Faerûn, his Cult's role in bringing this reality about, and its favored position in Toril's new order. On this book's pages are recorded all the cross-

breeding experiments that Sammaster conducted with dragons that allowed him a better understanding of how draconic life functions. These, in turn, led him to a better understanding of how to return dragons to a form of that life as dracoliches. These records allow any Cult wizards (or other wizards who somehow manage to decipher Sammaster's encrypted texts) to create any of the draconic hybrids detailed elsewhere in this book.

Further, this tome also contains all the spells detailed above in the Sammaster's Spells section (including all the necromantic wizard spells from the *Player's Handbook*.) This tome also contains the procedures and processes needed for the creation of a dracolich (see the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM entry later in this chapter). Finally, even further encrypted in a magical script of his own devising different than the bulk of the manuscript, Sammaster detailed the creation process and materials needed to create *amulets of draconic might*. No one can create a new *amulet of draconic might* without Sammaster's instructions.

In appearance, the original *Tome of the Dragon* is 14 inches tall×10 inches wide×6 inches thick and is covered in tanned, treated red dragon hide. It is closed with a clasp in the form of the Cult's symbol. The cover is unadorned but for a Cult symbol displayed prominently in gold gilt upon the front cover.

The covers of the *Tome* radiate magic, and if a *dispel magic* is cast on the *Tome* before it is handled, the book can be safely examined and read for 1 turn per level of the caster of the *dispel magic*. If no such precaution is taken, anyone who touches the *Tome* must make a saving throw vs. death magic or be affected by the dragon breath emitted by the tome. Thereafter, a 1d20 roll is made for each page turned and compared to a secret 1d20 roll made by the DM; whenever the character's roll is less than the DM's, a dragon breath effect is emitted and affects the character.

The dragon breath of the *Tome of the Dragon* is generated by its enchantments and never harms the book that produces it. Each time the breath gouts forth, it has one of the following effects (determine randomly by 1d6 roll), which originate from the *Tome* except as noted:

1. Black dragon acid gouts forth in a 60-foot-long stream dealing 4d4+2 points of damage (save vs. breath weapon for half damage). Items in the possession of characters who do not successfully save must make item saving throws vs. acid.
2. Blue dragon lightning arcs outward in a straight-line 70-foot-long bolt dealing 4d8+2 points of damage (save vs. breath weapon for half damage). Items in the possession of characters who do not successfully save must make item saving throws vs. lightning.
3. Green dragon gas issues forth in a cloud 40 feet long and 20 feet wide and high inflicting 4d6+2 points of damage (save vs. breath weapon for half damage).
4. Red dragon fire blasts outward in a cone 60 feet long, 20 feet wide at its origin, and 20 feet wide at its farthest extent inflicting 4d10+2 points of damage (save vs. breath weapon for half damage). Items in the possession of characters who do not successfully save must make item saving throws vs. magical fire.
5. White dragon frost issues forth in a cone 40 feet long, 20 feet wide at its origin, and 20 feet wide at its farthest extent causing 2d6+2 points of damage (save vs. breath weapon for half damage). Items in the possession of characters who do not successfully save must make item saving throws vs. cold.
6. Two breath effects occur, one originating from the *Tome* and one beginning 40 feet distant directly behind the character handling the *Tome* and aimed back toward the *Tome*.

There is also said to be an invisible, unmarked enchantment on a particular page of the *Tome* (a page that displays a spell) that allows someone who knows about it and is in direct flesh-to-page contact to utter a secret word of activation that immediately inflicts 3d8 points of damage on them but empowers them to breath forth a dragon breath weapon of their choice (from those listed above that the *Tome* can emit and identical in damage and extent to the *Tome* emissions) once per round for the next three rounds.

Another page of the *Tome of the Dragon* is said to bear an invisible enchantment that is awakened the same way as the dragon breath power (uttering a secret word while touching the page). It acts as a *teleport without error* spell on the awakener of the ability. The *Tome* is left behind, but the awakener and all nonliving items she or he is carrying or



wearing are whisked safely to a remote location on the surface of Faerûn. Unfortunately, the destination is (randomly) chosen by the *Tome*, regardless of the wishes of the being teleported.

The book is written in a magical cipher constructed by Sammaster that resists all known mundane and magical decoding attempts (such as *comprehend languages* spells). Some form of magic is woven into the writings, as the letters themselves register on a *detect magic* spell, so certain magics employed by the church of Deneir might possibly be able to break the code, but the only known way to read the writings is through the knowledge of how to render the pages readable that is passed on from Cult wizard to Cult wizard verbally. All such wizards are geased never to reveal the secret to any non-Cult member, even under pain of torture or magical compulsion.

Over the centuries since Sammaster's death, many copies of the *Tome of the Dragon* have been made by Cult members, the better to spread Sammaster's divine teachings. (Most major cells of the Cult have their own copy, and some individuals do too, though those belonging to individuals are the most likely to be more corrupt copies.) While these texts all likely have some form of magical protection cast on them, the single original volume of the *Tome of the Dragon* is nigh-indestructible and qualifies as an artifact. No known magical spell or mundane attack can permanently harm it in any way.

Some quotes that have leaked out from copies of Sammaster's work over the years include:

"Benevolence is the best mask for manipulation. Those who have power are sluggards and wastrels if they use it not, but are wisest if they learn many ways to achieve their ends. There is a time for the ravaging assault and a time for deft misdirection. And then there are grimmer occasions when one lacks even the time to choose how to proceed. These are best kept rare."

"Mages are superior to other mortals for they alone have felt, raw and unfettered by the guiding hands of deities, the power that moves and gives life to all things. It is right that wizards rule."

"Death is not to be feared, but to be passed and surpassed. Beyond death lies cold reason and immortality in which power is all—as it should be."

"To think again upon some action taken is to waste time better spent in turning to tackle something else. Move on; Faerûn provides us all with an endless supply of foes."

"Danger lies not in the talons and spells of foes, but in one's own doubts and fears. Wizards have no time to waste thinking on dangers if they are truly to become masters of magic."

"There is a shorter term for kindly wizards. One can and should call them 'fools.'"

"It is rare that the gods allow any of us a second strike upon a foe who has beaten us before. To waste it is to insult them—and they will swiftly show how they suffer such slights."

Harper sages theorize that, if the original *Tome* could be found, the *silver fire* of Mystra's Chosen (and perhaps even Shandril Shessair's spellfire ability) just might be able to damage it. Rumor and legend also say that the original *Tome* bears some lingering horrible curse beyond the traps detailed above for any non-Cult member comes into contact with the it.

Dragon Spells

Dragon spells are devised by dragons, for dragons; other creatures simply cannot use dragon magic unless they create their own versions of dragon spells, which will usually be of reduced effectiveness once completed. These spells are available only to dragons and dracoliches. Any dragon capable of casting dragon spells may know these magics, not just the dragons and dracoliches that are associated with the Cult.

Note that dragons, in general, are capable of using "spells" in three ways. Only two are available to dragons that are not defined as having character levels in a spell-casting class (usually dragon mages, but sometimes dragon clerics, bards, etc.): spell-like abilities due to age and race, and spells. "Character" dragon spells are available to dragons that have character levels.

Spell-like Abilities Due to Age and Race: These abilities are innate to dragons and are gained as the dragon ages. For example, young blue dragons can *create* or *destroy water* three times a day and mature adult green dragons can *warp wood* three times a day. These abilities are not expressed as wizard or priest spell slots of a certain level, they are just capabilities that the specific type and age of dragon has. Spell-like abilities of this type have a casting time of 3 and are not interruptible. Dragons do not have to study, concentrate, or take any action whatsoever to gain the ability to use these powers again after they have used them. So long as a dragon is still alive (or in existence, in the case of undead creatures), it regains these abilities the next day.

Spells: Dragon spells are expressed as wizard or priest spell slots of certain levels. Most frequently, a dragon has to reach a certain age to begin casting spells, and then as it gets older, a greater number of spells of higher levels become available to it. Dragon spells of this sort are learned haphazardly, and most dragons cannot choose which spells they learn—suddenly something "clicks" and they just know how to cast a particular spell. (This means that DMs should determine which spells most dragons know randomly.) Dragons can cast each spell they know once a day (unless random determination of their spells produces the same spell twice, in which case they can cast it twice per day)

Dragon spells have a casting time of 1 and use only a Verbal component. Most dragons do not use spellbooks or pray to deities to cast their spells (though a deity usually reveals to dragons capable of casting priest spells how to first cast the spells they know). They sleep for sufficient time to be well rested and concentrate for long enough to impress in their minds the manner in which they cast a par-



ticular spell, and they then remember their spells. (Certain dragons, such as gold dragons, keep spellbooks and pursue formal magical training. This means that they study to regain their spells just as a wizard does, but all other aspects of their spell use as a species conform to these guidelines.) Dragon spells can be interrupted, and dragons cannot physically attack, use their breath weapons, use their spell-like abilities, or fly (except to glide) while casting a spell.

“Character” Dragon Spells: These dragon spells function almost identically to normal wizard and priest spells, except that they are slightly more powerful than those spells of comparable level used by humans, demihumans, and humanoids. They can have any combination of verbal, somatic, and material spell components, have casting times of other than 1, etc.

To cast a spell in this way, a dragon has to be a unique individual with character levels in a class that casts wizard or priest spells. Dragon mages of this type keep spellbooks and must learn spells just as normal wizards do. They recover spells through sleep and study just as wizards do, also. Dragon priests of this sort pray for spells just as priests do and are restricted in spheres just as human priests are depending on their class and the deity they serve. (Dragon characters from the COUNCIL OF WYRMS™ AD&D game setting would be an example of this type of dragons, as would Daurgothoth, a dracolich described in the *The Cult Today* chapter earlier.)

Note that character dragon spells can be learned by normal dragons as normal dragon spells and thus be castable with verbal-only components and a casting time of 1 when the character dragon spell normally would have additional spell components or a longer casting time. However, dragons cannot, in general, cast both normal dragon spells or character dragon spells. They are either normal dragons or special dragons that use the rules for characters, not both.

The Spells Detailed Here: The spells detailed here are described in the terms necessary to use them as character dragon spells. Most dragons that know them will know them, however, as normal dragon spells. When used as normal dragon spells, these spells have only a verbal component and a casting time of 1. For the purposes of normal dragon usage of these spells, if the effects, duration, etc. of a spell are dependent on the caster's level, the level the dragon casts at is dependent on its species and age, as defined in its MONSTROUS MANUAL tome entry. (For example, a black dragon of wyrm age casts spells—and uses spell-like abilities—at 16th level.)

1st level

Burnish (Wiz 1; Alteration, Abjuration) *Reversible*

Range: Touch
Components: V
Duration: 1 day/level
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: Up to 1,000 pounds of metal/level
Saving Throw: None

This spell is employed regularly by many copper, bronze, and brass dragons whose skins often acquire an unsightly patina on their scales over time. Copper dragons in particular employ this spell to remove the verdigris that plagues their scales in wet climes.

Burnish can be employed on any metal—including gold, silver, bronze, brass, or copper—to restore its natural luster and shine, no matter where it is found, even as a trace element of another substance. Thus, metallic dragons can employ it on themselves or on their hoards. Up to 1,000 pounds of metal (in other words, 10,000 coins) per level of the spellcaster can be burnished by means of this spell. Since metallic dragons contain only trace amounts of metal in their scales, one application of this spell is sufficient to restore a vain wyrm's natural hue, no matter how large the wyrm is.

In addition, for the duration of the spell, any metal enchanted by means of this spell does not tarnish under any conditions. This protection can be ended by means of a *dispel magic* spell or similar incantation. When the spell duration expires, tarnishing proceeds at its normal rate.

The reverse of this spell, *tarnish*, was invented by a mischievous and vain copper dragon who commonly employed it to diminish the luster of rivals, particularly when competing for a likely mate. *Tarnish* covers precious metals in an unsightly patina, diminishing their luster, and can also be employed on substances with only traces of metal in their composition.

Hoard Servant (Wiz 1; Conjunction/Summoning)

Range: 10 yards
Components: V
Duration: 1 hour/level
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

This spell is the draconic version of the standard *unseen servant* spell. Since the needs of a dragon are far greater than those of lesser races (according to dragons), a common *unseen servant* just does not possess the physical strength to fulfill its required tasks.

Unlike an *unseen servant*, a *hoard servant's* sole purpose is to tend the hoard of the casting dragon. In fact, the spell is cast on the hoard itself, binding the *hoard servant* to it for the duration of the spell; it can never move more than 10 yards away from the hoard without negating the spell. (Note that a dragon's hoard is treasure in a single location for the purposes of this spell, not secreted in a number of separate lairs.)

Once the spell is cast, the *hoard servant* polishes jewels and gems, separates and stacks coins, organizes chests and boxes, etc. It is stronger than a standard *unseen servant* and is able to carry 50 lbs. or push or pull 100 lbs. over smooth surfaces. It can also withstand more damage than an *unseen servant*, possessing 15 hit points instead of the usual 6. A *hoard servant* is identical to an *unseen servant* with regard to its limitations and means of destruction.



This spell is particularly favored by metallic and gem dragons, both of whom seem more interested in the appearance of their hoards than do other dragons.

Scale Shift (Wiz 1; Alteration)

Range: 0
Components: V
Duration: 1 turn/level
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: The caster's scales
Saving Throw: None

With this spell, a dragon can change the color of its scales to that of another type of dragon. Note, however, that the color change must be within the dragon's related group (for example, chromatic dragons can change their color only to that of other chromatic dragons). Thus, a red dragon can change the color of its scales to green, blue, and so forth, but not to gold, silver, emerald, sapphire, etc.

This spell changes only the dragon's color, not its physical form. Therefore, if a white dragon changes the color of its scales to black, it retains the form of a white dragon. The color change is usually enough to fool most observers, however, for there are few beings who can recognize a dragon by its anatomy. Notable exceptions to this rule are other dragons, sages who specialize in dragons, and people with special knowledge about or extensive experience with dragons (and the latter would probably only know a great deal about particular types of dragons).

While the spell lasts, the dragon may change colors as it desires, but doing so in view of others may ruin the deception. Returning to the dragon's actual color ends the spell immediately. A successful *dispel magic* ends the spell prematurely as well.

Since the majority of dragons emphasize the superiority of their own particular subspecies, this spell is not as popular among dragonkind as one might think. Often the spell is used by dragons who must rely on guile to assure their continued survival. Weak or crippled dragons are the usual practitioners, as deception is a matter of survival and, therefore, a necessity. Older dragons of this sort often use the spell in conjunction with the *alter breath weapon* spell to make the ruse even more convincing.

Shadow Scry (Wiz 1; Divination; Shadow Magic)

Range: Special
Components: V
Casting Time: 1
Duration: 1 turn+1 round/level
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

By casting this spell, a dragon can use a shadow within its lair as a form of scrying device. The shadow chosen as the spell focus must be in the dragon's line of sight and no more than 10 yards distant.

Once the spell is cast, the dragon can contact another shadow within its lair and see out of it as if the dragon were actually standing within that shadow, regardless of

the shadow's size or shape or the boundaries of the dragon's lair. The dragon can see everything within sight of the contacted shadow, including the passage of invisible creatures, as the dragon's normal visual capabilities function normally through the *shadow scry* spell. Shadows outside the lair cannot be contacted.

The DM must use common sense when deciding the extent of the dragon's lair. For example, while a dragon may claim an entire forest as its territory (and may well control such a large amount of terrain), its lair should be regarded as the area where the dragon sleeps, keeps its treasure, and generally feels most comfortable and powerful.

As long as the spell remains in effect, the dragon can switch shadows to inspect different areas or view the same area from separate shadows to gain a different vantage point. However, only one shadow can be contacted at a time. The spell does not allow the dragon to cast other spells through the link between shadows; it allows vision only.

Switching from one contacted shadow to another requires a round and the mental command of the casting dragon; the shadow used as the *shadow scry* focus does not change. While complete concentration is not required for this spell, a small amount of attention is needed. If the dragon casts another spell, moves more than 10 yards away from the focus shadow, or no longer wishes to use the spell, the spell immediately ends.

Like normal scrying magic, *shadow scry* is revealed by a *detect scrying* spell. The contacted shadow radiates a faint dweomer, and, once detected, such spells as *dispel magic* or *screen* can be used against it (the former spell negates the *shadow scry* if cast successfully). Detection- and location-obscuring magic impedes the spell's effectiveness just as such magic impedes all other divination magic. Eliminating shadows with bright light or utter darkness prevents the spell from working in the illuminated or darkened area, but the dragon caster could still view the area from a shadow just outside such effects.

2nd level

Aerial Acceleration (Wiz 2; Alteration)

Range: Touch
Components: V
Casting Time: 2
Duration: 1 turn+1 turn/level
Area of Effect: Creature touched
Saving Throw: None

Although developed by dragons, *aerial acceleration* can affect any single flying creature, either natural or empowered by magic, touched by the casting dragon. This spell reduces air friction, increasing a creature's flying movement rate by 50%. Thus, a dragon with a movement rate of 24 can fly at 36 for the spell's duration. While flying at this increased speed, however, the dragon's maneuverability class (MC) worsens one step, and special aerial maneuvers (for example, snatching) are impossible. The dragon is not required to move at the increased rate and may slow to overcome the spell's drawbacks. *Aerial acceleration* cannot



be canceled at will, but a successful *dispel magic* or a more powerful spell can force it to end prematurely.

Dragons typically use this spell before an aerial battle to increase their odds of catching opponents by surprise or, if things go awry, as a way to outdistance pursuers. Inventive dragons may find other uses for the spell.

This spell depends heavily on a dragon's innate ability to visualize flight patterns and air currents. At the DM's discretion, dragons who employ this spell regularly might be considered expert flyers and thus might retain their normal maneuverability class and aerial tactics. This should be the exception and not the rule.

Aura of Terror (Wiz 2; Illusion/Phantasm)

Range: 0
Components: V
Casting Time: 2
Duration: 1 turn/level
Area of Effect: The caster
Saving Throw: Special

This spell is popular among younger, weaker dragons, though dragons of all ages and types have been known to use it. By using this spell, a dragon enhances its ability to strike terror in creatures subject to its fear aura. See the general "Dragon" entry of the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM* for an overview of the details of dragon fear.

When the spell is cast, the dragon weaves an illusion that enhances its image of rage and battle experience: multiple battle scars, altered or disfigured features, longer spine-spikes, fangs, and talons, and so on. All this makes the dragon seem even more menacing than usual. The illusion cannot change the dragon's size or species, but the spell does make the dragon seem older.

Once the spell is cast, the dragon gains two age categories for purposes of determining the range, saving throw, and effect of its fear aura. Young and juvenile dragons gain a fear aura that they would normally not be entitled to; older dragons gain a more powerful aura.

Because of the shift in effective age category, saving throws against the fear aura of dragons of young adult age and older suffer a -2 penalty. Thus, the usually unmodified saving throw for a dragon of old age becomes a saving throw with a -2 penalty, a great wyrm dragon's aura inflicts a -5 penalty, and so forth. Furthermore, the enhanced power of the aura allows the dragon to strike *panic* into creatures of up to 2 Hit Dice and *fear* into creatures that normally would be unaffected (that is, those with up to two more levels or Hit Dice than the dragon).

The dragon need not concentrate to maintain an *aura of terror* and can engage in other actions as desired (for example; combat, using its breath weapon, or casting additional spells). The dragon can end the spell at will.

Creatures attempting to disbelieve the illusion gain a saving throw vs. spell to negate the aura. Even if this is successful, however, normal saving throws against the dragon's regular *fear aura* still apply. *Detect magic* can indicate the presence of an *aura of terror*, and a successful *dispel magic* can remove it.

Calm (Wiz 2; Alteration)

Range: 0
Components: V
Casting Time: 1
Duration: Concentration
Area of Effect: The caster
Saving Throw: None

The spell calm enables a dragon to temporarily nullify the effects of its own *fear aura*. While the dragon concentrates, creatures suffer no morale effects from the sight or presence of the dragon. The spell ends as soon as the dragon ceases to concentrate on it. It also ends if the dragon suffers damage or casts a spell of 4th level or higher.

Dragonbane (Wiz 2; Divination)

Range: 10 yards/level
Components: V
Duration: 1 turn+1 round/level
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: 10-yard-wide path
Saving Throw: None

This highly specialized spell combines *detect magic* and *identify* spells in such a way that the draconic caster can determine whether any object within the spell's area of effect carries a dweomer specifically related to dragons and draconic magic. Thus, any magical items capable of discharging dragon magic spells (or that were created with draconic magic), weapons of dragon slaying, *potions of dragon control*, and even an *Orb of Dragonkind* are noted by the dragon. Likewise, *dragonbane* detects active spells (including draconic magic spells) that produce such effects.

The dragon does not learn the exact properties or power of any enchantment so noted. For example, a simple *sword +1, +2 vs. dragons* appears no more or less dangerous to the dragon than an intelligent *sword +5, dragon slayer* with the special purpose power enabling it to slay dragons with a single stroke. The only thing the caster knows is that both weapons are more powerful against dragons than against other creatures.

In any case, this spell is not a replacement for *detect magic* or *identify*. Its primary function is use in battle, as it allows the dragon to determine whether its foes are using magical items and spells that are especially dangerous to dragonkind. This way, the dragon knows whom to concentrate its attacks against or whom to avoid if things get sticky.

Hand (Wiz 2; Invocation/Evocation)

Range: 5 yards/level
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 2
Duration: 2 rounds/level
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

The spell brings into being a faintly glowing area of force similar in size and shape to a human hand. It has four



fingers and an opposable thumb. The fingers of the hand are much more precise in their movements than, for example, an *unseen servant*. The Dexterity ability score of the fingers is equal to the casting dragon's Intelligence plus 1d3-1.

The hand is very weak when compared to typical dragon strength. It can lift objects weighing up to 60 pounds and can apply an equivalent amount of force. Thus, it can crush only the most fragile of objects. The hand cannot wield a weapon or throw an object.

The hand can deliver a single slapping attack per round; its THACO is the same as the dragon's. The slap causes no damage, but a successful hit can break a spellcaster's concentration and ruin a spell.

The dragon must have a direct line of sight to the hand. As soon as the dragon's view of the hand is blocked, the spell ends.

For dragons unable to polymorph or shapechange into human or demihuman form, the lack of small manipulating digits is a real problem. They cannot write, they cannot open small jewelry boxes, and so on. The hand spell solves this problem.

3rd Level

Blast Jewel (Wiz 3; Alteration, Evocation)

Range: Touch
Components: V, M
Casting Time: 1 round
Duration: Until triggered
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: Special

By means of this spell, a dragon traces an invisible glyph on a prized gemstone. The symbol can be seen only by the dragon who traced it, though a *detect magic* will find a faint aura, while *detect invisibility*, *true seeing*, or similar magics reveal the glyph. A successful *dispel magic* negates the glyph without harming the jewel itself before the glyph's effects can be activated. Otherwise, the spell remains dormant until the dragon decides to activate it.

At the mental command of the dragon, the gemstone explodes with great force, showering a 20-foot-radius area with a hail of shrapnel. The dragon can trigger the explosion from any distance, even if thousands of miles separate the dragon and the gem. If the jewel and the dragon are separated by a planar boundary or the dragon is slain, then the spell is immediately negated.

All creatures within the area of effect suffer 5d4 points of damage, half that if a saving throw vs. breath weapon succeeds. Any creature holding or carrying the jewel when the explosion occurs receives no saving throw.

If, however, the gem was carried in a chest, metal box, or a similar rigid and sturdy container, then the explosion is contained and no damage is inflicted on any creature, though objects inside the container (and the container itself) must save vs. crushing blow or be destroyed. The explosion of magical force is sufficient to shred pouches, sacks, backpacks, saddlebags, and so forth, even if such items are made of leather or other durable fabric. Items

such as *portable holes* and *bags of holding* receive a saving throw vs. disintegration to survive; if they do not, then any surviving contents are lost in an extradimensional plane.

Dragons use this spell as the proverbial "last laugh" against thieves. When the dragon notices that one of its *blast jewels* is missing, it simply activates the magic, thus destroying the gem and sending a message to the creature that had the audacity to take it.

The material component is a gemstone worth at least 500 gp. The gemstone must be an individual, loose stone; it cannot be set into a piece of jewelry or embedded into a weapon. The jewel is completely destroyed in the explosion; nothing but dust remains.

Bloodburn (Wiz 3; Invocation/Evocation)

Range: Touch
Components: V
Duration: 5 rounds
Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: 1 creature
Saving Throw: Special

Also known as *bloodboil*, this spell is employed only by the most diabolical dragons, as it inflicts an agonizing death on its unfortunate victim. Red dragons in particular enjoy casting this spell on presumptuous wizards and arrogant knights.

When cast on a living creature, this spell causes any liquids in the creature's body to become very hot in a matter of seconds. When cast against animals, *bloodburn* causes the target's blood to actually ignite within the creature's arteries and veins, inflicting 2d4 points of damage per round. (This makes spellcasting impossible while the spell effect continues.) Water stored within plants begins to immediately boil, dealing 1d4 points of damage per round. Slimes, jellies, and oozes immediately dissolve due to this spell and are instantly slain (provided they do not succeed at their initial saving throw). Undead creatures and creatures immune to fire or heat damage are unaffected by this spell.

If the target of this spell succeeds at a saving throw vs. spell, it is unaffected. Targets that fail their saving throws can attempt another saving throw at the beginning of round three of the spell's effect (after having taken a total of 4d4 points of damage) and every subsequent round at a -3 penalty. When such a target succeeds at one of these subsequent saving throws, the spell ends and no further damage is inflicted. (However, in the round the saving throw is successfully made, affected targets may still not cast spells as they are recovering their wits for the remainder of the round.)

Otherwise, the only way to halt the effect before the spell expires is to successfully cast *dispel magic* (or a similar incantation) upon the spell's target or to cast some form of cold spell, such as *cone of cold*, that totally envelops him or her. (Note that the cold spell does not inflict its normal damage.) If the cold spell is only partially enveloping (such as *frost fingers* spell or a *cone of cold* cast too closely), the *bloodburn* effect dies down for that round (no fire damage is inflicted), but then immediately spreads throughout the



victim's fluids once again, inflicting regular damage the following round.

Clutch Ward (Wiz 3; Alteration)

Range: Touch
Components: V
Duration: Special
Casting Time: Special
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

This simple yet highly useful spell utilizes teleportation magic to protect the unhatched eggs of the dragon. During casting, the dragon handles each egg in the clutch, the entire process requiring 1 round of casting time per egg. Thereafter, the spell lies dormant until activated.

Upon completion of the spell, no creature other than the casting dragon may so much as touch a single egg within the clutch without triggering its magic. When the spell is activated, all of the eggs immediately *teleport without error* (as the spell) to another location known to the dragon that is determined during the spell's casting. If each egg is subjected to a separate casting of the spell, however, an individual egg can have its own destination point (though this is rarely done).

In addition, the casting dragon is immediately aware that the spell has been triggered, regardless of the distance between the dragon and the eggs (including planar boundaries). If the dragon was asleep at the time the eggs teleport, it is instantly awakened and alert.

The duration of the spell is indefinite, and it lies dormant until activated. Once activated, the spell must be cast anew if the eggs are to remain protected. Otherwise, nothing short of a *limited wish* can negate the spell. If an egg hatches prior to the spell's activation, the newborn dragon does not trigger the magic, though the hatchling itself is no longer protected by the clutch ward and is left behind if the spell is later activated.

Find Humanoid Familiar

(Wiz 3; Conjuraton/Summoning)

Range: 1 mile/level
Components: V
Casting Time: 1d20 hours
Duration: Special
Area of Effect: 1 familiar
Saving Throw: Special

This spell is similar to the wizard spell *find familiar* except that the familiar summoned by this spell is a humanoid. Only races of the goblinoid class are eligible to become familiars (in other words, kobolds, goblins, orcs, and hobgoblins).

The humanoid so attracted is unshakably loyal to the draconic caster (morale 20), willingly giving its life for its master. The dragon and humanoid share the ability to communicate telepathically at a range of up to five miles. The dragon gains no sensory bonuses, and it suffers no damage should the humanoid familiar die.

The casting takes considerable time. The dragon must be in a calm, relaxed state, well away from any distractions, and must continuously repeat a monotonous, hypnotic chant until the familiar appears. It is impossible for the dragon to maintain the chant for longer than 20 hours, so if at the end of this period no familiar has arrived, the spell fails. A dragon can cast this spell no more than once per year, and it can have no more than one familiar at one time.

When the familiar arrives, it is totally loyal to its master. *Find humanoid familiar* is actually a form of charm, however; it grants its victim a similar opportunity to throw off its effects. On a regular basis, the familiar can roll a saving throw vs. spell, this roll suffering a penalty of -1 for each three age categories of the casting dragon. The frequency of the saving throw depends on the race of the familiar.

A successful saving throw means that the familiar has thrown off the effects of the spell and is totally free-willed again. (Its first reaction will probably be to escape.) If the dragon is within five miles of the familiar and awake when it shakes off the influence, it senses the termination of the telepathic bond and thus know that its familiar is free. The dragon's response to this depends on its alignment and mood.

The DM can select an appropriate humanoid candidate depending on where the dragon is casting the spell, or she or he can use the following table:

D20 Roll	Familiar	Frequency of Save
1-6	Kobold	Every 2 years
7-11	Goblin	Every year
12-14	Orc	Every 9 months
15-16	Hobgoblin	Every 6 months
17-20	No humanoid available; spell fails.	

Killing a familiar while it is still bound by the spell is not acceptable behavior and brings down upon the dragon retribution from various celestial powers. (Killing a former familiar once it has shaken the spell is just fine, however, provided the dragon's alignment or the situation allows such behavior.)

Hoard Armor (Wiz 3; Alteration)

Range: 0
Components: V, M
Duration: 1 hour/level
Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: The spellcaster
Saving Throw: None

Hoard armor is used by dragons both to take advantage of the large number of coins and gems that comprise their hoards for defensive purposes, as well as to dazzle other creatures with a garish display of their wealth. When this spell is cast, any unsecured gems or precious metals (copper, silver, electrum, gold, or platinum only) that are less than a half pound in weight apiece and within 20 feet of



the spellcaster are drawn to the immediate vicinity of the spellcaster's body. The gems and chunks of precious metal (usually coins) form a whirling cocoon around the spellcaster that shimmers and sparkles in nearly any intensity of light. By means of the magic of this spell, the enveloping *hoard* never obscures the spellcaster's face, hands (claws), or feet, so it is possible to eat, talk, cast spells, fight, or walk normally.

If the spellcaster is of huge or gargantuan size, for every 1,000 gems or pieces of precious metal attracted by the spell, the spellcaster receives a +1 bonus to his or her AC. If the spellcaster is of medium or large size, the Armor Class bonus is +1 per 100 gems or pieces of precious metal. If the spellcaster is of tiny or small size, the Armor Class bonus is +1 per 20 gems or pieces of precious metal. In all cases, the maximum AC bonus resulting from this spell is +5.

Although the spellcaster does not physically carry the material components of *hoard armor*, all movement rates of the spellcaster are reduced by 3, and, if the spellcaster can fly by means of wings or similar natural nonmagical locomotion, his or her maneuverability class is penalized by one class (to a maximum of E).

When this spell expires or a *dispel magic* or similar incantation is successfully cast, the enveloping *hoard armor* immediately falls off and is once again subject to the pull of gravity.

Casting this spell is costly, particularly to naturally avaricious dragons, for 1% of the gems and pieces of precious metal composing the *hoard armor*, selected randomly, are consumed by the magic of this spell and are forever lost. As a result, this spell is not as commonly employed as one might expect.

The material component of this spell is the 1% of the gems and pieces of precious metal used to comprise the *hoard armor* that are consumed when the spell ends.

Pseudodragon

(Wiz 3; Conjuration/Summoning)

Range: 30 yards
Components: V
Casting Time: 3
Duration: 2 rounds+1 round/level
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

This spell is a draconic version of the various *monster summoning* spells. It summons 2d4 pseudodragons within 1d4 rounds to a spot within the spell's range. The summoned pseudodragons are tiny replicas of the summoner; that is, a green dragon conjures green pseudodragons, a blue dragon summons blue ones, and so forth. The pseudodragons share the alignment of the dragon who cast the spell and serve the summoning dragon with complete loyalty. Otherwise, the pseudodragons conform to the abilities and characteristics of pseudodragons as noted in the MONSTROUS MANUAL tome.

Once the pseudodragons arrive, they fight on the summoning dragon's behalf until they are slain, until the dragon commands them to stop fighting, or until the spell's

duration expires. If all opponents are slain, the summoner must grant the pseudodragons a portion of the kill.

If no opponents are available, the dragon can assign the pseudodragons other tasks. In return, the dragon must give each pseudodragon a gemstone (before aid is rendered) worth at least 50 gp. If no gems are forthcoming, the summoned dragons immediately return from whence they came. Similarly, the dragon must give each surviving pseudodragon a 50-gp gemstone after a battle with the dragon's enemies. If a dragon makes a habit of killing or refusing to pay the pseudodragons, the pseudodragons summoned by subsequent castings may refuse to assist or may simply refuse to answer the summons.

Scalespray (Wiz 3; Alteration)

Range: 0
Components: V
Duration: Instantaneous
Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: 50-foot radius
Saving Throw: ½

Sleeping on a cold stone floor or rolling around on a pile of treasure is rough on the hide. The frequent pokes and prods from weapons, stalagmites, and the remains of yesterday's armored lunch often cause a dragon's layered scales to become loose and fall off in places. And that says nothing for the coins, gems, and the occasional halfling thief mashed up in there! *Scalespray* takes advantage of this condition by hurling the loosened scales, gems, coins, bones, and so forth away from the dragon's body as missile weapons. When the spell is cast, all creatures in the area of effect are showered with these projectiles, suffering 1d6 points of damage per age category of the dragon to a maximum of 10d6. A saving throw vs. breath weapon reduces the damage by half.

This spell does not see as much use as might be expected, since many dragons like the idea of having bits of treasure stuck to their hides—it makes them look more impressive. Thus, the spell's usefulness is often outweighed by the dragon's own vanity.

Sharptooth (Wiz 3; Alteration)

Range: 0
Components: V
Casting Time: 3
Duration: 1 round/level to a maximum of 1 turn
Area of Effect: The caster
Saving Throw: None

This simple spell is a favorite among dragons who enjoy sinking their teeth into combat. The spell alters the dragon's fangs, making them harder and sharper. In melee, this adds +1 per two age categories (round down to a minimum of 1 point) to each damage roll on any successful bite attack for as long as the spell lasts. Dragons also employ *sharp-tooth* when gnawing apart a tasty but tough meal, such as orcs, armored dwarves, or knights in plate armor.



Venomdust (Wiz 3; Invocation/Evocation)

Range: 0
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 round
Duration: 1 month/level
Area of Effect: 1 square foot/level
Saving Throw: Special

The *venomdust* spell enables the dragon to create small amounts of highly toxic poisonous dust. The dust can then be sprinkled onto objects, where it adheres. Anyone touching an object so treated with bare skin must roll a successful saving throw vs. poison or die in one round. Even on a successful saving throw, the victim suffers 2d10 points of damage. The casting dragon is totally immune to the toxicity of its own dust.

For each effective level of the dragon, the spell creates enough dust to cover an area of one square foot. Thus a red wyrm, which casts spells at 20th level, can create enough *venomdust* to cover a 4-foot × 5-foot area.

Venomdust can be detected by *detect magic* and rendered harmless by a successful casting of *dispel magic* or *neutralize poison*. The dragon can negate the dust, making it harmless, at will.

Dragons frequently use *venomdust* to protect the most precious parts of their hoards.

4th Level

Firetrail (Wiz 4; Invocation/Evocation)

Range: 0
Components: V
Casting Time: 4
Duration: Special
Area of Effect: A 40-long/level trail
Saving Throw: Special

The *firetrail* spell was developed by an ancient and long-dead red dragon named Thermal for a specific purpose: setting fire to towns and other settlements that the creature wanted to attack. This is a very rare spell, and only a few evil dragons know it.

The spell must be cast by a dragon while in flight. As its name implies, it creates a trail of tiny, fiery droplets in the air behind the dragon. These droplets fall to the ground at a rate of 30 feet per round. When they touch the ground or any solid object, they burst into flame, each burning for only a few seconds but with the same amount of heat as a burning torch. This fire has an 80% chance of igniting anything flammable (usual modifiers apply for wet material, etc.). The length of the trail is 40 feet per effective level of the casting dragon. Thus a red wyrm (effective level 20) could create a firetrail 800 feet long.

While the trail is still falling, it can be disrupted by spells like *gust of wind* or by natural winds. These effects do not prevent the droplets of the trail from reaching the ground, however; they just spread it out, possibly enhancing its effects. (The DM must carefully adjudicate this depending on circumstances.)

Although the spell's main purpose is to set fire to a town, *firetrail* can also cause serious personal damage. Anyone under the *firetrail* when it reaches the ground is struck by 1d20 droplets, each of which inflicts 1d2 points of damage (a saving throw vs. spell for half damage is allowed). Any creature foolish enough to fly through a descending *firetrail* is struck by 3d10 droplets, each inflicting 1d2 points of damage (save for half damage).

Focus Fear (Wiz 4; Alteration) *Reversible*

Range: 0
Components: V
Casting Time: 4
Duration: 1 round/level
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: Special

Similar in function to the *aura of terror* spell, *focus fear* increases the potency of the dragon's panic and fear auras. It is useful for all dragons of adult age or older, and it can be used in conjunction with an *aura of terror*.

By means of this spell, the dragon reduces the radius of its fear aura, focusing the power of that fear. For every 5 yards the dragon reduces its aura, the saving throw modifier against the dragon fear gains an additional -1 penalty. However, a dragon cannot reduce its fear aura to a radius of less than 15 yards in any case. An adult dragon with a normal fear radius of 20 yards and a saving throw modifier of +2 can reduce its fear radius to 15 yards and change the modifier to +1. Likewise, a great wyrm could condense its fear radius to 15 yards from 50 yards, changing its usual -4 save modifier to -11. A natural 20 saves regardless of the modifiers.

The reverse of this spell, *extend fear*, allows the dragon to enlarge its fear radius to a maximum of 50 yards. An extended aura weakens when made larger with saving throw modifiers changing in the opposite manner to *focus fear*. The reverse can be used by dragons as young as young adults (if they possess the required spellcasting ability), but is useless to a great wyrm.

Both versions of this spell allow the dragon such fine control of the fear radius that it can alter the dimensions of its fear radius on a round-by-round basis. Of course, the aura can be altered only within the parameters of the version employed (that is, any radius between the dragon's normal radius and the limits of the appropriate version of the spell). To change the radius while the spell is in effect, the dragon must stop what it is doing and concentrate; it cannot engage in activities in that round. Otherwise, the dragon is free to cast spells, fight, fly, use its breath weapon, and so on, as the spell requires no concentration. The dragon can cancel the spell at any time. A *dispel magic* has no effect on either version of this spell, though spells such as *wish*, *limited wish*, and the like can end the dweomer immediately.

Both versions of this spell are fairly common among dragons capable of casting a spell of this level.



Hoardguard (Wiz 4; Abjuration, Evocation)

Range: 0
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 round
Duration: 1 hour/level
Area of Effect: As breath weapon
Saving Throw: None

By means of this spell, a dragon can protect its hoard in such a way as to make theft virtually impossible. When *hoardguard* is cast, the dragon's breath weapon temporarily changes. Instead of the usual fire, lightning, acid, and so on, the breath weapon becomes pure magical energy that must be released by the dragon within 1 round following the spell's casting or the magic is wasted. The dragon breathes this energy (which conforms to the dimensions of the dragon's usual breath weapon) over its hoard, attempting to encompass as much of the hoard as possible within the area of effect.

This energy bonds whatever parts of the hoard it touches into a solid mass. The spell does not harm the hoard in any way, nor does it alter its appearance or position; the items within the hoard remain loose and separate. Instead, the *hoardguard* magic fills in the spaces between the individual coins, gems, weapons, chests, ingots, and so forth, and holds them together as a solid mound of wealth. This invisible bond prevents the hoard from being sorted, separated for transport, scattered, or otherwise moved or manipulated as separate items. Because it has essentially become one single mass, lifting the hoard as a whole is impossible by any single creature except through powerful magic.

The hoard so protected cannot be harmed by physical or magical attacks without first removing the *hoardguard* spell. It is thus impossible for intruders to break off pieces or sections of the hoard and carry them away.

Dispel magic has no effect on a hoard protected by the spell, and an *antimagic shell* frees only as much treasure as fits within its area of effect. (If freed treasure is not removed from the hoard, the *hoardguard* magic reasserts itself as soon as the shell expires or moves away.) A *limited wish* negates a *hoardguard* for one hour (and if the treasure is not separated in that time, the *hoardguard* will return as above). A full *wish* destroys the spell permanently.

Treasure added to a hoard already protected by this spell does not gain the spell's benefits. New treasure requires a *hoardguard* of its own, though the dragon may include the new treasure after the first *hoardguard's* duration expires and a new spell is cast.

This spell only affects the dragon's hoard. It does not function upon creatures or the items they possess unless the dragon acquires the items and adds them to its hoard. This spell typically protects the dragon's treasure while it is out hunting for food or seeking treasure. Some dragons arrange their hoards so that the entire amount can be warded with a single spell. Others make several smaller piles so as to use up an invader's magical powers in repeatedly negating the spell and thus minimize the overall treasure loss.

Wingbind (Wiz 4; Evocation)

Range: 40 feet/level
Components: V
Casting Time: 3
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Special
Area of Effect: 1 dragon

Wingbind is a highly effective combat spell that is rare even among dragons. It creates a web or net of force that entangles the target, which must be a dragon. This force net has the same effect as a grappling attack: the dragon is unable to fly and plummets toward the ground.

The target dragon receives an initial saving throw vs. spell to avoid the effects of the spell. At the end of each subsequent round, it receives another saving throw vs. spell, but with a cumulative -3 penalty. A successful saving throw means that the dragon has broken free from the net of force.

The *wingbind* spell remains in effect until either the duration expires, the victim successfully saves, the caster is slain or rendered unconscious, the caster intentionally releases the spell, or the victim slams into the ground.

A wingbound dragon falls at 125 feet per second or 7,500 feet per round. After the *wingbind* spell is terminated—for whatever reason—the victim continues to fall for another 2d10 seconds (250-2,500 feet). If it strikes the ground during this time, it suffers 1d6 points of damage per 10 feet fallen to a maximum of 20d6.

5th level

Breathblock (Wiz 5; Evocation)

Range: 10 yards/level
Components: V
Casting Time: 2
Duration: 1 round/level
Area of Effect: 50x50-foot shield
Saving Throw: None

The *breathblock* spell is much like the 1st-level wizard *shield* spell. The spell brings into being an invisible plane of force 50 feet on a side that is totally impervious to all draconic breath weapons. The dragon can create the wall anywhere within the maximum range and can instantaneously move it to any point inside that range. The wall of force can be maneuvered as a shield to protect the dragon, other creatures, or valuable objects (that is, treasure). If positioned directly in front of the mouth of a dragon about to use a breath weapon, the breath weapon either reflects or billows back upon the breathing dragon. Unless the dragon is immune to its own attack form—which is usually the case—the dragon suffers half damage from the breath weapon (save vs. breath weapon for one-quarter damage). Any other creatures within 30 feet of the breathing dragon but on its side of the *breathblock* also suffer half damage (save for quarter damage).

The most spectacular use of this spell was when the legendary gold dragon Autophon defeated the fiend Lash and the red dragon the fiend used for a mount. As the red



dragon prepared to use its breath weapon, Autophon cast *breathblock*. The red's fire billowed backward around it, causing the dragon no damage but so enraging the fiend that it attacked its own mount. This took the pressure off Autophon long enough for him to slay both fiend and red dragon.

Razorfangs (Wiz 5; Alteration; Shadow Magic)

Range: 0
Components: V
Casting Time: 5
Duration: 1 round/level to a maximum of 1 turn
Area of Effect: The caster
Saving Throw: Special

This spell is a highly improved version of the *sharptooth* spell. When a *razorfangs* spell is cast, the dragon's teeth become exceptionally hard, strong, and sharp. Due to this alteration, any successful bite attack inflicts +2 per two age categories to each damage roll (round down to a minimum of 2 points). Furthermore, on an unmodified roll of 19 or 20, the bite severs an opponent's limb (or other extremity, as appropriate), just as if the victim had been struck with a *sword of sharpness*. If the victim fails a saving throw vs. death magic upon becoming the victim of such a successful attack roll, his or her head is severed as if by a *vorpal sword*.

Shadow Dragon (Wiz 5; Alteration; Shadow Magic)

Range: 0
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 round
Duration: 1 turn/level
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

Used almost exclusively by shadow dragons, this spell allows a dragon to transform itself into pure shadowstuff. While so transformed, the dragon retains all of its powers and abilities, including spell use, breath weapon, and so forth. In dim, shadowy areas, a dragon affected by *shadow dragon* can hide in shadows with a 90% chance of success, and the dragon is totally invisible in utter darkness (either magical or natural).

Once in this form (and during the one full round it takes for the dragon to transform), the dragon is impervious to most attacks, though it is not entirely invulnerable. Attacks that can harm a shadow dragon include:

- Light-based spells inflict 1d6 points of damage per spell level for each round a shadow dragon remains in their area of effect. Thus, a *light* or a *faerie fire* spell inflicts 1d6 points of damage per round of exposure, a *continual light* inflicts 3d6, and the light of a *prismatic sphere* inflicts 9d6 points of damage each round a shadow dragon remains within its radiance. Spells that create a flash or burst effect inflict double this damage, but allow a saving throw vs. spell for half damage. All other spells do not harm a shadow dragon unless specifically designed to

affect shadows or creatures composed of shadow or dragonkind in general. (While *fireball* and other fire-based spells do shed some light, they are not considered light-based for purposes of this spell.)

- Normal weapons do not harm a shadow dragon unless augmented with a light-based spell, in which case damage is inflicted as above according to the spell used. (The weapon itself inflicts no damage, nor do bonuses due to magic or high Strength scores.) An augmented weapon implies the use of a *light*, *continual light*, or similar spell that has been placed directly on the weapon.
- Magical weapons inflict damage equal to their magical bonus. If augmented with a light-based spell, the light damage and the magical damage are combined. Strength bonuses and normal weapon damage are excluded. Magical weapons that normally shed light inflict damage as an augmented weapon.
- Full sunlight immediately negates the spell and forces the dragon back into its true form. The change occurs in a single round, during which time the dragon is helpless and can do nothing other than suffer through the forced transformation. Opponents gain a free round of attacks. While the transformation takes place, the light-based attacks noted above have no effect, but other attack forms have normal effects.

6th Level

Alter Breath Weapon (Wiz 6; Alteration)

Range: 0
Components: V
Duration: 1 round/level
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

With this spell, a dragon's breath weapon takes on the appearance and properties of the breath weapon of another type of dragon. For dragons who possess multiple breath weapon forms, only one is changed by the spell. In any case, the spell causes an actual change, not an illusion. Furthermore, the amount of damage caused by the altered breath weapon is the same as that of the dragon's true breath weapon; only the type, not the power, of the breath weapon is changed.

For example, a red dragon can use this spell to change its fiery breath weapon into a cloud of chlorine gas (as used by green dragons) but with a damage potential equal to its usual flame breath weapon. By using this spell, the dragon is able to harm creatures that are normally immune or resistant to its fiery breath (for example, another red dragon). Of course, a creature immune to chlorine gas or to dragon breath weapons in general is still unharmed by the attack.

Alter breath weapon can be ended prematurely with a successful *dispel magic* or similar effect or by silent will of the dragon. However, the spell does not permit the dragon to shift through multiple types of breath weapons; once a particular type of breath weapon is chosen for a particular casting of the spell, it cannot be changed, save to revert



back to the dragon's true breath weapon, thus ending the spell. Likewise, multiple *alter breath weapon* spells cannot be in effect at the same time. If a second *alter breath weapon* is attempted before the first expires, both spells are immediately negated.

7th level

Contact Archetype (Wiz 7; Divination)

Range: 0
 Components: V
 Casting Time: 4 rounds
 Duration: 1 question/3 levels
 Area of Effect: Special
 Saving Throw: None

This spell is similar to the 5th-level wizard spell *contact other plane* except that with it a dragon can contact one of the two archetypes of metallic and chromatic dragonkind—Bahamut, the Platinum Dragon, or Tiamat, the Chromatic Dragon. Both powers resent such contact, so only brief answers are given to the questions the caster asks. For every three effective levels (or fraction thereof) it possesses, the dragon can ask one question. Contact with the minds of such powerful creatures poses the risk of insanity; for powerful dragons, this risk is generally lower than for humans contacting extraplanar beings, however. If insanity occurs, it strikes as soon as the first question is asked and lasts for 2d10 weeks.

Power	Chance of Insanity*	Chance to Know	Chance of Veracity
Bahamut	30%	70%	90%
Tiamat	45%	85%	75%

*For each effective level of the caster, decrease the chance of insanity by 1%.

If the archetype does not know an answer and the veracity roll fails, the archetype emphatically gives an incorrect answer. If answer is not known and the veracity roll is successful, the archetype's answer is "unknown."

Tiamat's chance of veracity is decreased by 15% for each step of alignment the questioner is away from Tiamat's lawful evil. (Thus, if the questioner is a chaotic good brass dragon, the chance of veracity is only 15%.)

Door of Death (Wiz 7; Necromancy)

Range: 0
 Components: V
 Casting Time: 2 rounds
 Duration: Affects 50 Hit Dice or levels
 Area of Effect: 1 doorway/portal
 Saving Throw: Neg.

Using this spell, the draconic caster can ward a particular doorway or portal so that any creature who tries to pass through the portal without first speaking a word of command is immediately the subject of a modified form of the *death spell*. (Here the word "portal" can also refer to a cave

opening or tunnel no more than 30 feet in diameter.) A single application of this spell can kill up to 50 Hit Dice or levels of creatures before becoming inert.

Each creature passing through the portal rolls a saving throw vs. wand with a -2 penalty; a successful saving throw roll means that the creature survives. Even if the creature successfully saves, the creature's Hit Dice or level is deducted from the total power remaining to the warded doorway. If a creature passing through the door has more Hit Dice or levels than remain in the spell, the spell ends, and the creature is unharmed.

Example: A dragon has cast *door of death* on the entrance into her cave. Three characters try to pass through the portal—a 15th-level fighter, a 16th-level cleric, and a 16th-level mage. The fighter and cleric fail their saving throws and die immediately; the mage makes his saving throw and survives. The *door of death* spell has expended 47 levels (15+16+16), which means that only 3 remain. Later, a 4th-level thief walks through the door. Since the thief has more levels than remain to the spell, the spell ends, and the thief is unaffected.

Note that only the doorway or portal itself is warded. An individual could conceivably smash through or otherwise penetrate the wall next to the door and enter safely.

A portal protected by a *door of death* spell radiates a strong aura of necromantic magic. While casting the spell, the dragon can choose whether or not the warding is to be visible. If the dragon chooses visibility, the portal is outlined by a faint blue glow; this glow is not bright enough to be seen in full daylight, but it is obvious under twilight or darker conditions.

8th level

Cold Curtain (Wiz 8; Necromancy)

Range: 0
 Components: V
 Casting Time: 2 rounds
 Duration: Special
 Area of Effect: One doorway or portal
 Saving Throw: Neg.

This is another warding spell quite similar to *door of death*. Using this spell, the draconic caster can ward a particular doorway or portal so that any creature who tries to pass through the portal without first speaking a word of command is immediately subjected to a modified form of *energy drain*. A portal protected by a *cold curtain* spell radiates a strong aura of necromantic magic, and the warded area has a temperature some 20° F lower than the area outside the curtain. (Here the word "portal" can also refer to a cave opening or tunnel no more than 30 feet in diameter.) The portal so warded must be the only entrance into a room or chamber no larger than a volume of 8,000 cubic feet (a cubic room 20 feet on a side, for example).

A single application of this spell can drain up to 30 Hit Dice or levels of creatures before becoming inert. Each creature passing through the portal must roll a saving throw vs. wands with a -2 penalty; a successful saving throw means that the creature is unaffected.



A failed saving throw means that the creature is subject to the full effect of the *cold curtain* spell. As soon as the creature passes through the portal, it loses one level or Hit Die (as if struck by a wight). A monster loses 1 Hit Die permanently, suffering losses in both hit points and attack ability. A character loses a level, a Hit Die, hit points, and abilities permanently (until regained through adventuring, if applicable, or other magical means are taken that restore drained levels).

At the end of each round that a creature remains within the area warded by the *cold curtain*, it loses another level or Hit Die. There is no saving throw against these subsequent losses. This loss continues each round until the creature steps back through the curtain to the area outside the warded area. (This passage from inside to outside does not cause another level loss.)

The curtain can affect any number of creatures simultaneously. When it has drained a total of 30 Hit Dice or levels, the spell terminates.

Note that only the doorway or portal itself is warded. An individual could conceivably smash through or otherwise penetrate the wall next to the door and enter safely.

While casting the spell, the dragon can choose whether or not the warding is to be visible. If the dragon chooses visibility, the portal is covered by a faintly shimmering blue glow that is totally transparent; this glow is not bright enough to be seen in full daylight, but it is obvious under twilight or darker conditions.

Death Matrix (Wiz 8; Evocation, Necromancy)

Range: 0
Components: V
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 1 turn
Area Of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: ½

When this spell is cast, an extremely powerful and complex pattern of magical energy is woven into the dragon's life force, and it cannot be negated (or even detected) by any means short of a full wish. Thereafter, the magic lies dormant until activated, but it grows in strength as the dragon ages, due to its connection with the dragon's life force.

Upon the dragon's demise, the *death matrix* is triggered, causing the dragon's corpse to blow apart in an enormous explosion that showers a 50-foot-radius sphere with gem-encrusted scales, muscle and sinew, bones, claws, fangs, innards, and blood—and the raw, unrestrained might of the dragon's breath weapon. All creatures within the radius must immediately save vs. breath weapon. If the saving throw is successful, the damage caused by the explosion is reduced by half. Otherwise, the explosion inflicts an amount of damage equal to the breath weapon of the dragon. Worse still, any damage die result of a 1 or 2 is regarded as a 3; thus, the triggered *death matrix* of a great red wyrm inflicts an astounding 84-252 points of damage (24d10+12, counting all rolls of 1 or 2 as 3).

Note, however, that since the explosion includes the hurled body parts of the dragon and basic concussive force

in addition to the dragon's breath weapon, immunity to that breath weapon does not provide immunity to damage. Finally, objects exposed to the blast must make item saving throws vs. disintegration or be destroyed. Creatures or objects killed or destroyed by the explosion are completely obliterated.

As noted, only a full *wish* can remove a *death matrix*. Beyond that, there is only one method to avoid triggering a *death matrix*, and that is the instantaneous annihilation of the dragon. A spell like *disintegrate* or a magical item such as a *sphere of annihilation* is necessary to obliterate the dragon instantly and completely. Without the dragon's corpse (or a fraction thereof), the *death matrix* cannot cause an explosion and simply dissipates in a wave of magical energy noticeable by creatures in the radius as a tingling sensation. It is otherwise harmless and cannot be absorbed or harnessed in any way. If even so much as a scale remains of the dragon, the *death matrix* is triggered upon its death. (The damage inflicted is considerably lessened if only a fraction of the dragon's body remains. DMs must use their own judgment in modifying the damage in such cases.)

Obviously, the level of this spell puts it out of reach for use by most dragons, regardless of age or species. Therefore, most dragons must rely on scrolls bearing the spell in order to set up a *death matrix*.

Dragon Magical Items

The creation of dragon magical items is a facet of dragon magic that is generally overlooked and usually misunderstood. Throughout the AD&D game, few magical items are assumed to have been created by dragons purely for draconic usage. *The Draconomicon* provides a handful of such items, and this section supplies a few more.

Dragons can use any items not restricted to particular classes. It is up to DM to decide if a dragon can wear a *ring of protection* (on a horn, for instance). Spellcasting dragons, on the other hand, can use magical items restricted to the class from which they cast spells. A dragon capable of casting wizard spells could use any item that a mage could. Dragons that cast both mage and priest spells can use items restricted to either class. DMs must determine how, if at all, dragons would use wands, *crystal balls*, etc.

The XP values for these magical items were included for the sake of completeness. They are particularly useful in campaigns that use part of the COUNCIL OF WYRMS game setting rules, however, as dragon characters in that setting must accumulate experience points in order to advance in level. In other settings, the XP values can be ignored.

Amulet of Supremacy

XP Value: 10,000 **GP Value:** 100,000+

Only a handful of these potent devices are believed to exist, for the ability to create them is limited to the most powerful dragons, both in age and magical ability. Any dragon is capable of using these devices, however.

An *amulet of supremacy* is nothing short of a masterpiece, for it is constructed of the purest metals, the finest



jewels and gemstones, and the artistry of a master crafts-person. In fact, the jewelry value alone for such a device approaches 100,000 gp. To dragons, an *amulet of supremacy* is priceless.

When worn, an *amulet of supremacy* causes a dragon's breath weapon, spells, and natural spell-like powers to operate at their maximum potential (for example, maximum damage, duration, area of effect, etc.). Saving throws against these effects still apply, however.

An *amulet of supremacy* is strictly a draconic device; if worn by any other species, death is immediate, usually taking the form of instantaneous immolation or disintegration with no saving throw allowed.

Circlet of the Wyrm

XP Value: 2,000 **GP Value:** 10,000

This band of platinum is usually unadorned and magically expands or contracts to fit snugly around the brow of any dragon that wears it. While wearing the *circlet*, a dragon receives all the power of a wyrm of the appropriate species. This includes increased damage from breath weapons, increased Hit Dice, increased combat modifiers, and decreased THAC0s. A dragon automatically receives the innate magical powers that are normally gained by dragons only when they reach the age category of wyrm. Finally, a dragon can cast as many spells as a wyrm. (It does not automatically learn any new spells, however, so this might not be a significant benefit).

All of this assumes that the dragon is not already a wyrm or great wyrm. Wyrms are unaffected by the *circlet*, while great wyrms diminish in power while wearing the *circlet*.

The *circlet* may be removed at any time, but the mental shock causes the creature to be stunned for 1d4+1 rounds. For each round that the dragon engages in melee combat, there is a 5% (noncumulative) chance that the *circlet* falls off, stunning the dragon. If the dragon grapples or is grappled by another dragon, the chance increases to 10% per round (noncumulative) as long as the dragons continue to grapple. There is also a one-shot 7% chance that the *circlet* falls off during a wingover maneuver.

Dragons can wear the *circlet* only when they are in their own form. *Polymorph* and *shapechange* spells cause the *circlet* to fall off, stunning the dragon.

There are legends of a similar *circlet of the great wyrm*, but this magical item has never been found.

Dragon Fangs

XP Value: 500 (*sharptooth*) **GP Value:** 2,500

XP Value: 1,000 (*razorfangs*) **GP Value:** 5,000

This device is a hinged mouthpiece to which are attached several metal fang caps. By placing the device in its mouth and sliding its fangs into the hollow caps, the dragon can use the magic of the *dragon fangs*.

Dragon fangs come in two varieties. The weaker variety bears a permanent *sharptooth* dweomer, the other a permanent *razorfangs* enchantment. Both versions duplicate the effects of the spells they carry (see above) so long as the *dragonfangs* are worn.

Dragon fangs are difficult to manufacture, as they can be used only by the dragon for whom they were created. They adjust in size in order to fit the dragon's teeth as it grows older, but unless the dragon has an identical twin, clone, simulacrum, or the like, no other dragon can use a given set of *dragon fangs*.

Focus Object

XP Value: 1,000

GP Value: 5,000

One of the more serious dilemmas a dragon must face when defending its lair from invaders is how to go about dispatching such opponents without destroying its hoard. Many dragons rely on the *hoardguard* spell to solve the problem, but most do not have access to that spell. Therefore, such dragons must resort to other methods, like a *focus object*.

Focus objects take many forms but most often appear as a piece of jewelry that the dragon can wear, as the dragon must be in contact with the device in order to use its powers.

A *focus object* allows the dragon to reduce the effective area of its breath weapon so that only a single target suffers damage from a direct attack. Thus, cloud- or cone-shaped breath weapons become narrow shafts. Breath weapons that already take such a form (for example, acid, lightning, etc.) cannot be reduced by the device. (Obviously, *focus objects* have limited use among dragons, as such devices are restricted to dragons whose breath weapons have a large area of effect.) Despite its altered dimensions, the breath weapon's damage is not diminished, and saving throws against it are not modified for the reduced area.

Hoardstone

XP Value: 5,000

GP Value: 25,000

A dragon's status among its peers is determined by several factors. The dragon's personal might is the most obvious one, but its species, age, experience, and intellect are important as well. Perhaps the least considered element, however, is the value of a dragon's hoard. Often, the value of a dragon's hoard is just as important to its status as any of the other factors. A *hoardstone* improves a dragon's status in this regard by temporarily increasing the quality and value of items in close proximity to it (in other words, the dragon's hoard).

A *hoardstone* always takes the form of a flawless gemstone of any type, but it must have a value of at least 5,000 gp. It functions in a manner quite similar to a *jewel of flawlessness*, but where the jewel affects only gemstones, a *hoardstone* affects all items within its area of effect (a 50-foot-radius sphere around the *hoardstone*), including seemingly worthless items.

All objects within the area increase in value by 25%. In the case of monetary treasure, this is an immediate and obvious increase. For example, flaws in jewels and gemstones disappear or diminish, precious metals become purer, works of art become more intricate or vibrant, and so forth. Magical items, however, do not grow in power, but the materials from which they are made increase in quality and value. For example, a carved and gem-studded staff



becomes more valuable monetarily (in other words, the gems rise in value, the wood is of greater quality, the carvings more intricate, etc.), but it does not gain additional charges nor do its effects become more powerful.

Items that have no monetary value (for example, a normal stone or piece of wood) do not suddenly become so endowed. Instead, the *hoardstone's* influence causes the quality and value of such objects to increase in comparison to similar items. For example, a worthless chunk of wood remains a worthless chunk of wood, but the *hoardstone's* influence makes it more durable by tightening its grain, strengthening and hardening the wood, and so on. The piece of wood might be valuable if sculpted thereafter, but until then it remains an ordinary piece of wood.

Items that are separated from the influence of the *hoardstone* retain their increased value for a period of time equal to that they spent in the presence of the *hoardstone*. For example, a gemstone that spent a year under the influence of a *hoardstone* retains its value increase for one year after being separated from that influence. Once that year has passed, the gemstone returns to its normal value.

Although a *hoardstone* radiates magic, the items it influences do not unless such items are normally magical. (If the dragon's entire hoard radiated a *dweomer*, any visiting dragons the *hoardstone's* owner was attempting to impress would likely realize that the hoard's value was magically enhanced, which would, no doubt, cause the dragon actually to lose status.) Furthermore, multiple *hoardstones* placed in the same hoard do not cause the hoard's value to increase any more than if only a single *hoardstone* were present.

Hoardstones can be created only by dragons. The reason for this has something to do with the unique relationship between a dragon and its hoard. Dragons, more than any other species, are driven by an irresistible need to accumulate treasure, an inherited urge they cannot escape. Thus, only they truly understand the "spirit" of valuable objects, an understanding that is necessary to manufacture a *hoardstone*. Other creatures may utilize a captured *hoardstone*, however. (Dwarves, in particular, love them.)

Wing Armor

XP Value: 1,000

GP Value: 5,000

When compared to the rest of its body, a dragon's wings are especially susceptible to grievous, even crippling, damage. The relatively thin flesh of a dragon's wings is easily ripped by the teeth and claws of another dragon. Such wounds can reduce its effectiveness in flight, force it to land, or—worse yet—cause the dragon to plummet uncontrollably to the earth.

Because of this potential danger, those dragons who can obtain it make use of *wing armor*, a pair of sleeves composed of an extremely fine, fibrous, metallic fabric (elven chain mail has nothing on this stuff) that is slipped over the wings for added protection. *Wing armor* is virtually weightless and magically adjusts to fit the dragon's wings, but it does not hinder the dragon's movements or flying ability in any way. In fact, the sleeves are so form-fitting that straps and harnesses are unnecessary to hold them in place.

Wing armor does not provide any bonuses to the dragon's AC, but it does render the dragon's wings immune to puncturing and shredding by piercing and slashing weapons, as well as by claws and teeth. Note, however, that a wing can still be injured from the concussive force of such attacks; *wing armor* simply prevents the actual piercing or tearing of a dragon's wings.

Monsters Used by the Cult

On the following pages are the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM sheets for the dracolich and several other variant creatures that either were created by Sammaster's magical researches or that have been adopted or subjugated for use by some, if not all, of the cells of the Cult of the Dragon. As is the case throughout this book, in many cases it is up to DMs to determine which Cult cells use any or all of the creatures below. It is known, however, that the large Cult cell in Sembia uses dragon-kin as guards, couriers of vitally important messages, or even as assassins, and *ur-histachii* are important servitors of the cell in Hlondeth.

The mantidrake, dracimera, and wyvern drake are all creations of Sammaster. He experimented often with draconic hybrids, crossing evil dragons with many other evil monsters. By this, he hoped to learn all there was to know about the processes of draconic life and therefore better understand how to create an undead form of dragon. By understanding their life, he endeavored to give dragons life after death. The hybrid creatures listed below are byproducts of that research.

These hybrids were not intentionally created by Sammaster to serve the Cult, but enterprising Cult members took advantage of Sammaster's twisted genius and these creatures continue to serve some Cult cells today. Specimens of these creatures have broken free of Cult control over the centuries since Sammaster lived and have gone feral. PCs may therefore encounter them in adventures unrelated to the Cult (though the players need not know that at first). Or perhaps the Cult mages just regained or are seeking to regain the knowledge to create these beings themselves. This could lead to many adventures as the PCs try to stop the Cult from creating more of these vile creatures.

The mantidrake, dracimera, and wyvern drake were all created during the same period of Sammaster's life. During this time, he bred various evil dragon races (red, green, blue, black, white, brown, and yellow) with many other evil creatures. Unlike the dracohydra, the mantidrake, dracimera, and wyvern drake possess varying abilities, determined by their draconic parent. These differences are reflected in their MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM sheets; however, other draconic parents than are accounted for in their descriptions will effect them in ways that must be determined by the DM through interpolation of the data presented there.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any temperature to tropical		
FREQUENCY:	Very rare		
ORGANIZATION:	solitary		
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any		
DIET:	Carnivore		
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)		
TREASURE:	Nil (F)		
ALIGNMENT:	Black: CE; Blue: LE; Green: LE; Red: CE; White: CE; Brown: NE; Yellow: CE		
NO. APPEARING:	1		
ARMOR CLASS:	Black: 1; Blue: 0; Green: 0; Red: -3; White: 1; Brown: 2; Yellow: 0		
MOVEMENT:	10, Fl 15 (E)		
HIT DICE:	12		
THACO:	9		
NO. OF ATTACKS:	6		
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	1d3/1d3/1d4/1d4/1d12/1d12 (claw/claw/horn/horn/bite/bite)		
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Breath weapon		
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to breath weapon of dragon parent and like attacks (spells, etc.)		
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil		
SIZE:	L (5 feet tall at the shoulder)		
MORALE:	Elite (13-14)		
XP VALUE:	Black	9,000	White 9,000
	Blue	10,000	Brown 9,000
	Green	10,000	Yellow 10,000
	Red	10,000	



The dracimera is the offspring of a chimera and an evil dragon. It has a dragon head up front surrounded by a lion's mane (like the mantidrake), a lizard head with two goat's horns growing from the middle of its back, and a dragon head and neck like that of its dragon parent growing where a lion's tail would be. The lizard head is blue-green with the amber eyes and other horns of the chimera.

Wild dracimerae speak the language of their dragon parent, with some halting knowledge of the language of red dragons (provided their draconic parent is not a red dragon). Those dracimerae raised from birth by the Cult of the Dragon normally know common and the language of their dragon parent (though it is spoken with a slight human accent).

Combat: The dracimera is perhaps the deadliest of the known dragon hybrids. In physical combat, it attacks six times in a single round. It strikes with both forelegs (1d3 points of damage each), butts with both goat horns (1d4 points of damage each), and bites with its front and back dragon heads (1d12 points of damage each).

Its breath weapon is the same as that of its dragon parent, and the dracimera can use it six times per day. This weapon is divided up among the three heads, with each head able to use it twice per day. If one head does not use its "share," the other heads do not gain "extra" uses. Damage done by the dracimera's breath weapon is equal to the beast's normal hit point total. This damage does not vary as the beast is wounded or healed over time, and magical effects that artificially boost hit points do not make the breath weapon more powerful.

The dracimera is immune to attack forms that resemble its breath weapon (a white-dragon-parented dracimera is immune to normal and magical cold, for instance). Finally, dracimerae do not suffer any additional damage or effects from weapons or items specifically designed to kill dragons. (A *sword* or an *arrow of dragon slaying* could not outright slay it. The dracimera would take all damage otherwise appropriate, however.)

Dragon

Parent Breath Weapon

Black	Jet of acid 5 feet wide, 60 feet long; victim takes half damage if successful save vs. breath weapon is made.
Blue	Bolt of lightning 5 feet wide, 100 feet long; half damage if save is made.

Green	Cloud of chlorine gas 50 feet long, 40 feet wide, and 30 feet high; half damage if save is made vs. breath weapon.
Red	Cone of fire 5 feet at mouth, 90 feet long, 30 feet wide at cone's widest; half damage if save is made.
White	Cone of frost 5 feet wide, 70 feet long, 25 feet wide at cone's widest; half damage if save is made vs. breath weapon.
Brown	Jet of acid 5 feet wide, 60 feet long; victim takes half damage if successful save vs. breath weapon is made.
Yellow	Blast of scorching air and sand 50 feet long, 40 feet wide, and 20 feet high; half damage if save is made vs. breath weapon.

Habitat/Society: A wild dracimera lives in the same tropical regions as its chimera parent (and usually is the offspring of a black or red dragon). Such dracimerae are solitary creatures, coming together to mate only once in a single decade. A single young is born to a successful mating. Due to the small numbers of dracimerae in existence in the wild, most dracimerae are not born of dracimerae, but of a chimera and dragon pairing. Dracimerae live in the most remote and inaccessible regions of their hunting grounds, which cover at least 400 square miles. They hoard treasure much like their dragon ancestors, for much the same reasons.

Cult dracimerae are typically used as guards of important areas, treasure caches, secret passageways, or as powerful shock troops in Cult raids against some strong foe or caravan.

Ecology: The wild dracimera is an ferocious predator and tolerates no other large carnivores or omnivores in its territory. It attacks intruders on sight. Although it hunts an area of no more than 25 square miles in a day, a dracimera can fly up to 100 miles a day and still return to its lair by nightfall.

Unlike its chimera parent, the dracimera is a pure carnivore. However, it is generally not strapped for food due to this specialization, as its reptilian physiology enables it to go without eating for as long as a week. When it does find plenty of flesh, it gorges itself. Anything made of flesh and blood is fair game, particularly humans and humanoids, and the surprising number of giant artifacts in dracimera lairs is mute testament to dracimera combat power.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate/mountains or barrens
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	Special
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	1 (1d4)
ARMOR CLASS:	2 (base)
MOVEMENT:	6, Fl 21(D)
HIT DICE:	12 (base)
THAC0:	9 (base)
NO. OF ATTACKS:	4 to 7 (depending on number of heads)+special
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	1d8 (claw)/1d8 (claw)/2d8 (bite, per head—at least 2 bites possible)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Variable
SIZE:	G (45 foot base)
MORALE:	Steady (11-12)
XP VALUE:	Variable

Dracohydras are hideous multiheaded winged monsters that combine the worst features of dragons and hydras. Some sages believe they are ancient offshoots of the pre-dragons that have been hibernating for millions of years; others believe they are the next step in the evolution of dragons. Still others think that they are the result of tampering by supernatural beings, such as Tiamat the Chromatic Dragon or other deities. Cult members propose that they are the result of Sammaster's researches into draconic life. In order to better understand how draconic life forms existed, Sammaster created many draco-crossbreeds. Many of these are still in use by Cult cells today. The dracohydra is one such creature.

Dracohydras have been reported with two to five heads. Twenty-five percent of dracohydras have two heads, 50% have three heads, 15% have four heads, and 10% have five heads.

The creatures are a muddy brown color, ranging to a lighter brown, almost a cream, on their bellies. Their eyes are red.

Dracohydras speak their own tongue, a derivative of the language of evil dragons. Dracohydras can understand about half of what evil dragons say, and vice versa. Dracohydras know no other languages, but can be taught to understand common by Cult mages.

Combat: Dracohydras share the same attack routines as standard dragons (including special attacks such as the snatch, plummet, kick, wing buffet, tail slap, and stall described under "Dragon, General" in the MONSTROUS MANUAL tome). Each round, each of the creature's heads can either bite or use its breath weapon. Heads inflict 2d8 points of damage per bite. The creature's claw attacks inflict 1d8 points of damage per claw.



A dracohydra's total hit points are divided as follows: Half the points are assigned to the body (including the wings), and the other half are split evenly between the heads. (For example, say that a three-headed dracohydra has a total of 72 hit points. Its body has 36 hit points, while each of its heads has 12.) When a dracohydra head has been reduced to 0 hit points, the head "dies" and becomes useless. As soon as all heads are destroyed or the body is reduced to 0 hit points, the dracohydra is dead.

In combat, 80% of successful frontal attacks against a dracohydra damage a head (random selection); only 20% hit the body. For foes attacking from the side, the odds are reversed: 80% of hits damage the body, while 20% hit a randomly selected head. Foes attacking from the rear always inflict damage to the body.

Breath Weapon/Special Abilities: Dracohydras spit sprays of concentrated acid similar to the breath weapon of a black dragon. The acid stream is 3 feet wide and extends 40 feet in a straight line from the creature's head. All creatures caught in this stream must roll successful saving throws vs. breath weapon for half damage.

Each head is able to use its breath weapon independently, dividing the total allowable damage between as many uses as the creature desires. This means that a five-headed great wyrm is an incredibly daunting foe, since each of its five heads can inflict 12d2+12 points of damage. Dracohydras use their special abilities at 8th level, plus their combat modifier.

Dracohydras are born with an innate immunity to acid. As they age, they gain the following powers:

Young adult: *Wall of fog* twice per day.

Adult: *Darkness* three times per day

Old: *Stinking cloud* twice per day.

Wyrms: *Cloudkill* once per day

Habitat/Society: Wild dracohydras are found in remote mountainous regions far from civilization. They prefer snow-covered peaks around which violent storms often play. Dracohydras are most like white dragons in their outlook: rapacious, selfish, and ferocious. Their low Intelligence makes it difficult for them to plan or think in an abstract manner, so their behavior is most often direct.

Basically, these beasts are bullies, killing any intruders into their territories even if they are not hungry at the moment. If faced by a strong foe that will not back down, they often run away. Conversely, they enjoy playing with a weaker foe before killing it. This easily manipulated predilection makes them excellent tools of the Cult for those cells “lucky” enough to have access to them. These cells most commonly use dracohydras as stationary guards of sites important to the Cult. These include secret passageways, treasure or magical item caches, or the ruling member’s (or members’) inner sanctum.

Dracohydras are by preference solitary, associating with others of their kind only to mate. Offspring remain with the parents only until they reach the young age category. They then either head out on their own or—rarely—challenge one of their parents for its hoard. Parents protect their offspring, but not at the cost of their own lives. Should it look as though continued defense might mean death, the parents flee. Any encounter with more than one dracohydra is with a mated

pair with one or two offspring of age category hatchling (60%) or very young (40%).

Dracohydras hate all other dracoforms. If they think they can get away with it, they will attack other dracoforms on sight. Dracohydras also have no love for humans, demihumans, and humanoids. They sometimes enslave these smaller creatures, but the period of servitude never lasts long before the dracohydra gets hungry and eats its slaves. The Cult works hard to curb these tendencies in those dracohydras it makes use of, since having a dracohydra attack its members and other draconic and dracohybrid servants would be counterproductive. The same strategies of bribery, subterfuge, mental manipulation, and magical charming or domination that the Cult uses on its other servants are employed to good effect to keep its dracohydra “allies” in line.

Ecology: Like all draconic creatures, dracohydras can consume almost anything, including nonliving materials such as rocks or gems. They have a rapidly mounting, voracious hunger that they prefer to satisfy with fresh meat. This is the greatest hindrance to the Cult’s use of these creatures. The dracohydra must be kept near a large food supply such as a herd of grazing animals or other large, easily tractable beings.

Like the dracolisk (see the MONSTROUS MANUAL tome), the dracohydra is a distinct species, not a variety of hybrid creature such as the dracimera, mantidrake, or wyvern drake. (Its statistics remain stable for its species and do not vary according to its parentage.) The main enemies of dracohydras are storm giants, stone giants, and red dragons—who consider the flesh of the creatures’ young to be a delicacy

Age	Body (in Feet)	Tail (in Feet)	AC	Breath	Spells	MR	Treasure	XP Value
1	5-14	2-6	5	1d2+1	Nil	Nil	Nil	1,400
2	14-23	6-12	4	2d2+2	Nil	Nil	Nil	2,000
3	23-32	12-20	3	3d2+3	Nil	Nil	Nil	4,000
4	32-42	20-30	2	4d2+4	Nil	Nil	E	7,000
5	42-52	30-40	1	5d2+5	Nil	5%	E, O, S	9,000
6	52-63	40-50	0	6d2+6	Nil	10%	E, O, S	10,000
7	63-74	50-60	-1	7d2+7	Nil	15%	E, O, S	11,000
8	74-85	60-70	-2	8d2+8	Nil	20%	E, OSx2	13,000
9	85-96	70-80	-3	9d2+9	Nil	20%	E, O, Sx2	14,000
10	96-108	80-90	-4	10d2+10	Nil	20%	E, O, Sx2	15,000
11	108-120	90-100	-5	11d2+11	Nil	20%	E, O, Sx3	16,000
12	120-125	100-105	-6	12d2+12	Nil	20%	E, O, Sx3	17,000

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	As per former dragon type
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night (nocturnal)
DIET:	None required for sustenance, but as per former dragon type to refuel breath weapon
INTELLIGENCE:	As per individual dragon
TREASURE:	B, H, S, T
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil, neutral evil, or chaotic evil (as per former dragon type; nonevil dragons become evil on transformation)
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	As per former dragon type with an additional -2 bonus to AC
MOVEMENT:	As per former dragon type and age
HIT DICE:	As per former dragon type and age
THACO:	As per former dragon type and age
NO. OF ATTACKS:	As per former dragon type, typically 3+special
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	As per former dragon type and age+2d8 points of cold damage per successful attack+2d6 rounds of paralysis (save vs. paralysis allowed)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Breath weapon, spell use, paralyzing gaze, undead control
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Strengthened dragon fear aura; immune to <i>charm</i> , <i>sleep</i> , <i>enfeeblement</i> , <i>polymorph</i> , <i>cold</i> (magical or normal), <i>electricity</i> , <i>hold</i> , <i>insanity</i> , or <i>death</i> spells or symbols, <i>poison</i> , <i>paralysis</i> , and <i>turning</i> ; no attack or damage roll bonuses allowed against them; injured only by magical attacks from 6th-level or greater wizards or by attacks from 6 or more HD monsters
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	As per former dragon type and age
SIZE:	As per individual dragon
MORALE:	As per former dragon type until specific circumstances occur (see below), then Fearless (19-20)
XP VALUE:	As per individual dragon, plus 1,000 (both body and host must be destroyed)

The dracolich is an undead creature resulting from the unnatural transformation of a dragon. The mysterious Cult of the Dragon practices the powerful magic necessary for the creation of the dracolich, though other practitioners are also rumored to exist.

A dracolich can be created from any of the evil or neutral dragon subspecies. An evil or neutral dracolich retains the physical appearance of its original body, except that its eyes appear as glowing points of light floating in shadowy eye sockets. Skeletal or semiskeletal dracoliches have been observed on occasion.

The senses of a dracolich are similar to those of its original form, and it can detect invisible objects or creatures (including those hidden in darkness or fog) within a 10-foot radius per age category and also possess a natural *clairaudience* ability while in its lair equal to a range of 20 feet per age category. A dracolich can speak, cast spells, and employ the breath weapon of its original form. It can cast each of its spells once per day and can use its breath weapon once every three combat rounds. A dracolich retains the memories and intelligence of its original form.

Combat: Dracoliches are immune to *charm*, *sleep*, *enfeeblement*, *polymorph*, *cold* (magical or normal), *electricity*, *hold*, *insanity*, or *death* spells or symbols. They cannot be poisoned, paralyzed, or turned by priests. They have the same magic resistance as their original forms, but only magical attacks from wizards of 6th level or higher or attacks from monsters of 6 or more Hit Dice can injure dracoliches.

The Armor Class of a dracolich is equal to the Armor Class of its original form bettered by -2 (for example, if the AC of the original form is -1,



the AC of the dracolich is -3). Attacks on the dracolich, due to its magical nature, do not gain any attack or damage roll bonuses.

Initially, a dracolich has the same morale rating as its original form. However, after a dracolich is successful in its first battle, its morale rating permanently becomes Fearless (19 base). This assumes that the opponent or opponents involved in the battle had a Hit Dice total of at least 100% of the Hit Dice of the dracolich. (For instance, a 16-HD dracolich must defeat an opponent or opponents of at least 16 total HD in one battle to receive the morale increase.) Once a dracolich receives the morale increase, it becomes immune to magical *fear* as well.

The dracolich has a slightly stronger ability to cause fear in opponents than it did in its original form (a dragon's fear aura). Opponents must roll their saving throws vs. spell with a -1 penalty (in addition to any other relevant modifiers) to resist the dracolich's fear aura. The gaze of the dracolich's glowing eyes can also paralyze creatures within 40 yards if they fail their saving throws. (Creatures of 6th level or 6 Hit Dice or higher gain a +3 bonus to their saving throws.) If a creature successfully saves against the paralyzing gaze of a dracolich, it is permanently immune to the gaze of that particular dracolich.

The attack routine of a dracolich is similar to that of its original form. For example, a dracolich that was originally a green dragon brings down a weak opponent with a series of physical attacks, but it stalks more formidable opponents, attacking at an opportune moment with its breath weapon and spells.

All physical attacks, such as clawing and biting, inflict the same damage as the dracolich's original form plus 2d8 points of chilling damage. A victim struck by a dracolich who fails a saving throw vs. paralysis is paralyzed for 2d6 rounds. Immunity to cold damage, temporary or permanent, negates the chilling damage but not the paralysis. Dracoliches cannot drain life levels.

All dracoliches can attempt *undead control* (as per the *potion of undead control*) once every three days on any variety of undead within 60 yards. The undead creatures' saving throws against this power suffer a -3 penalty. If the *undead control* is successful, it lasts for one turn only. While *undead control* is in use, the dracolich cannot use its spells. If the dracolich interrupts its *undead control* before it has been used for a full turn, the dracolich must still wait three days before the power can be used again.

If a dracolich or proto-dracolich is slain, its spirit immediately returns to its host (see below). If there is no corpse in range for it to possess, the spirit is trapped in the host until such a time—if ever—that a corpse becomes available.

A dracolich is difficult to destroy. It can be destroyed outright by a *power word, kill* or a similar spell. If its spirit is currently contained in its host, destroying the host when a suitable corpse is not within range effectively destroys the dracolich. Likewise, an active dracolich is unable to attempt further possessions if its host is destroyed. The fate of a disembodied dracolich spirit—that is, a spirit with no body and no host—is unknown, but it is presumed that it is drawn to the lower planes.

Habitat/Society: The creation of a dracolich is a complex process involving the transformation of an evil or neutral dragon by arcane magical forces, the most notorious practitioners of which are the members of the Cult of the Dragon. The process is usually a cooperative effort between the evil dragon and wizards and/or priests, but especially powerful wizards and priests have been known to coerce an evil dragon to undergo the transformation against its will. Priest versions of this procedure are similar to the wizardly version described here, but priests still need a wizard's assistance for certain aspects of the transformation process, while wizards never a priest's aid—though it is sometimes welcomed. The church of Tiamat, in particular, is working to eliminate the requirements for wizardly assistance.

Any dragon is a possible candidate for transformation, although evil spell-casting dragons of old or older age are preferred. Once a candidate is secured, the wizards first prepare the dragon's host, an inanimate object that will hold the dragon's life force. The host must be a solid item of not less than 2,000 gp value resistant to decay (wood, for instance, is unsuitable). A gemstone is commonly used for a host, particularly ruby, pearl, carbuncle, jet, chalcedony, chrysocolla, citrine, epidote, moonbar, and morion (smoky quartz). The gemstone is often (though not always, by all means) set in the hilt of a sword or other weapon. The host is prepared by casting an *enchant an item* upon it and speaking the name of the evil dragon. The item may resist the spell by succeeding at a saving throw vs. spell as if it were an 11th-level wizard. If the spell is resisted, another item must be used for the host. If the spell is not resisted, the item can then function as a host. If desired, *glassteel* can be cast upon the host to protect it.

Next a special potion is prepared for the dragon to consume. The exact composition of the potion varies according to the age and type of the dragon, but it must contain precisely seven ingredients, among them a *potion of evil dragon control*, a *potion of invulnerability*, and the blood of a vampire. When the dragon consumes the potion, the results are determined as follows (roll percentile dice):

Roll	Result
01-10	No effect.
11-40	Potion does not work. The dragon suffers 2d12 points of damage and is helpless with convulsions for 1d2 rounds.
41-50	Potion does not work. The dragon dies. A full <i>wish</i> is required to restore the dragon to life. A <i>wish</i> to transform the dragon into a dracolich results in another roll on this table.
51-100	Potion works.

If the potion works, the dragon's spirit transfers to the host, regardless of the distance between the dragon's body and the host. A dim light within the host indicates the presence of the spirit. While contained in the host, the spirit cannot take any actions; it cannot be contacted nor attacked by magic. The spirit can remain in the host indefinitely.

Once the spirit is contained in the host, the host must be brought within 90 feet of a reptilian corpse—under no circumstances can the spirit possess a living body. The spirit's original body is ideal, but the corpse of any reptilian creature that died or was killed within the previous 30 days is suitable.

The wizard who originally prepared the host must touch the host, cast a *magic jar* spell while speaking the name of the dragon, then touch the corpse. The corpse must fail a saving throw vs. spell for the spirit to successfully possess it; if it saves, it will never accept the spirit. The following modifiers apply to the roll:

- -10 if the corpse is the spirit's own former body (which can be dead for any length of time).
- -4 if the corpse is of the same alignment as the dragon.
- -4 if the corpse is that of a true dragon (any type).
- -3 if the corpse is that of a fire Drake, ice lizard, wyvern, or fire lizard.
- -1 if the corpse is that of a dracolisk, dragonne, dinosaur, snake, or other reptile.

If the corpse accepts the spirit, it becomes animated by the spirit. If the animated corpse is the spirit's former body, it immediately becomes a dracolich; however, it will not regain the use of its voice and breath weapon for another seven days. (Note that it will not be able to cast spells with verbal components during this time.) At the end of seven days, the dracolich regains use of its voice and breath weapon.

If the animated corpse is not the spirit's former body, it immediately becomes a proto-dracolich. A proto-dracolich has the mind and memories of its original form but has the hit points and immunities to spells and priestly turning of a dracolich. A proto-dracolich can neither speak or cast spells; further, it cannot cause chilling damage, use a breath weapon, control undead, paralyze with its eyes, or cause fear as a dracolich. Its Strength, movement, and Armor Class are those of the possessed body.

To become a full dracolich, a proto-dracolich must devour 10% of its original body. Unless the body has been dispatched to another plane of existence, a proto-dracolich can always sense the presence of its original body regardless of the distance. A proto-dracolich tirelessly seeks out its original body to the exclusion of all other activities. If its original body has been burned, dismembered, or otherwise destroyed, the proto-dracolich need only devour the ashes or pieces equal to 10% of its original body mass. (Total destruction of the original body is only possible through the use of a *disintegrate* or similar spell; the body could be reconstructed with a *wish* or similar spell, so long as the spell is cast in the same plane as the disintegration.) If a proto-dracolich is unable to devour its original body, it is trapped in its current state until slain.

A proto-dracolich transforms into a full dracolich seven days after it devours its original body. When the transformation is complete, the dracolich resembles its original body: It can now speak, cast spells, and employ the breath weapon of its original body in addition to having all the abilities of a dracolich.

The procedure for possessing a new corpse is the same as explained above, except the assistance of a wizard is no longer necessary since casting *magic jar* is required only for the first possession. If the spirit successfully repossesses its original body it once again becomes a full dracolich. If the spirit possesses a different body it becomes a proto-dracolich and must devour its former body to become a full dracolich.

A symbiotic relationship exists between a dracolich and the wizards and/or priests who create it. The group that creates the dracolich honors and aids its dracolich, as well as providing it with regular offerings of treasure items. In return, the dracolich defends its animating organization (or individual) against enemies and other threats, as well as assisting it in its members' various schemes. Like dragons, dracoliches are loners, but they take comfort in the knowledge that they have allies.

Dracoliches are always found in the same habitats as the dragons from which they were created. Dracoliches created from green dragons, for instance, are likely to be found in subtropical or temperate forests. Though they do not live with their creators, dracoliches' lairs are never more than a few miles away from them or at least one of their regular meeting places or refuges. Dracoliches prefer darkness and are usually encountered at night, in shadowy forests, or in underground labyrinths. Dracoliches continue to age just as dragons do, becoming more powerful as they enter new age categories.

Ecology: Dracoliches are never hungry, but they must eat in order to refuel their breath weapon. Like dragons, dracoliches can consume nearly anything, but prefer the food eaten by their original forms. (For instance, if a dracolich was originally a red dragon, it prefers fresh meat.) The body of a destroyed dracolich crumbles into a foul-smelling powder with a few hours. This powder can be used by knowledgeable wizards as a component for creating *potions of undead control* and similar magical substances.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Subterranean/cave-dwelling in almost any climate and terrain
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional (15-16)
TREASURE:	Special
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	0
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	20
THACO:	2
NO. OF ATTACKS:	4
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	1d10+10/1d10+10/2d10+10/2d12+10
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Enhanced <i>fear aura</i> (can magically age), breathweapon, <i>energy drain</i> , withering
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to all spells cast by nonethereal opponents, all weapons of less than +3 enchantment, <i>charm</i> , <i>sleep</i> , <i>hold</i> , and all mind-control magic; cannot be turned or controlled by priests; immune to the effects of holy-water
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	G (40-100 feet long)
MORALE:	Special
XP VALUE:	10,500 (defeat), 21,000 (placate), 32,000 (lay permanently to rest)

Unlike most of the creatures listed in this section, ghost dragons are not a creation of Sammaster or the Cult, nor do spells or other undead beings create them. In their search for willing evil dragons to work with, members of the Cult have come across lairs of deceased dragons that are still inhabited by the spirits of their former owners. As Cult members learned, ghost dragons are truly terrible opponents.

A ghost dragon is a sinister-looking, semitransparent figure. It resembles whatever dragon type it was in life. All ghost dragons are a swirling murky gray, and they always speak in quiet whispers.

A ghost dragon is created when an ancient dragon is slain and its hoard looted. In many cases, the dragon died defending its hoard and home. The tie between a dragon and its hoard, however, goes far beyond mere human greed or dwarven avarice. The dragon will haunt its former lair until it manages to accumulate enough treasure to equal the value of its vanished wealth; then it will depart and rest in peace.

Ghost dragons never stir from their lairs. They are less belligerent than their living kin, but more obsessive. In many ways they resemble revenants more than true ghosts, except that they have no interest in revenge. All a ghost dragon thinks about is its treasure. Unfortunately for intruders, in the ghost dragon's mind, any and all valuables brought into its lair fall into this category. Since a ghost dragon can find peace only if it succeeds in rebuilding its lost hoard, it will demand trespassers hand over any treasure they are carrying—gold, jewelry, magical items, etc. The creature will allow polite adventures to keep 10% of their possessions (a procedure it calls "tithing") and will answer questions they might have regarding neighboring monsters or events it knew about in its lifetime. Those who refuse to turn over their valuables are savagely attacked.

Combat: A ghost dragon has several different attack modes, and since it is an exceptionally intelligent creature, it will always choose the combination that will best achieve its goal. Ghost dragons have a fear aura far more dangerous than that of their living counterparts. Victims of a ghost dragon's aura must make two saving throws, both at a -4 penalty: one vs. petrification to avoid aging 10-30 (1d3x10) years, and a second vs. spell to avoid cowering in terror for a full turn (10 rounds). Note that the aura affects all in the dragon's lair at the time it appears, including beings normally immune to fear effects, such as paladins.

A ghost dragon never ambushes intruders; it uses its aura first to get their attention and give them a chance to hand over their wealth without a fight. If they refuse and attack the ghost dragon, try to leave, or (worse yet) attempt to steal some of its remaining treasure, it begins its assault. In addition to its aura, a ghost dragon has a claw/claw/bite/tail-slap sequence daunting to even the toughest warrior. Not only can it inflict up to 104 points of damage in a single round, but each successful hit requires the victim to make a saving throw vs. death magic or lose two levels to an energy drain. Further, the limb struck (determined randomly) is affected as if struck by the withering power of a *staff of withering*: It shrivels and becomes useless unless the victim successfully saves vs. spell.

The ghost dragon also has a breath weapon it can use three times before it must desist 12 rounds to renew its internal energies (at which time it can breathe three more times). The breath weapon is a cloud of gray mist 50-feet long, 40-feet wide, and 30-feet high that ages any creature caught in it as follows: humans, halflings, half-elves, most humanoids 1d100 years; dwarves 3d10x10 years; gnomes 6d10x10 years; and elves 1d100x10 years.

Ghost dragons are immune to all spells cast by nonethereal opponents and all weapons of less than +3 enchantment. They are immune to *charm*, *sleep*, *hold*, and all mind-control magic, even if the caster is on the Ethereal Plane. They cannot be turned or controlled by priests; they are also immune to holy water.

If a ghost dragon is killed by damage or magic, it simply reforms 48 hours later and resumes its attempts to build its hoard. Most adventurers who have encountered a ghost dragon have found out that it is better to give the creature what it wants. The experience point values for dealing with ghost dragons reflect its unusual nature.

The only way to lay a ghost dragon to rest permanently is by giving it treasure. Once it has gathered enough wealth to replace its lost hoard in gp value (it need not literally be the exact treasure the dragon hoarded while alive), it will whisper a quiet "thank you" and disappear forever, never to return to the Prime Material again, leaving the accumulated treasure behind for anyone who wants it.

Habitat/Society: Ghost dragons are solitary creatures haunting the desolate ruins of their empty lairs. They can be found anywhere a live dragon would secure its most prized possessions, but always in dark, underground, or indoor places. As intelligent creatures, they enjoy the occasional conversation with intruders, but never allow themselves to be talked out of the treasure they need. Since only the eldest dragons (ancient dragons) possess the will to continue to exist beyond death as ghost dragons, and since most ghost dragons spend centuries if not millennia in that state, they can be valuable sources of information about the past—for those adventurers willing to pay their price. It is rumored that living dragons sympathize with the anguish that the ghost dragons feel over their plundered wealth and often help their departed kin by sending potential treasure their way in the form of unwary adventurers. Any Cult cells that discover a ghost dragon lair also arrange for potential or actual foes to hear of the lair, though not the nature of the lair's inhabitant. More than one Zhent or Harper group has fallen victim to such a ploy.

Ecology: Like most incorporeal undead, ghost dragons play no part in the living world, nor do they need to eat or sleep. Ferocious predators in life, in death they completely drop out of the local ecology. They do, however, play a large part in the economy of the regions they inhabit, as their "tithing" of passing adventurers tends to deplete both cash and surplus magical items in those areas. (An enterprising DM can use a ghost dragon to curb runaway inflation in a campaign world.)

Of course, after a ghost dragon regains "its" treasure and passes on to its afterlife in the planes, all the above-mentioned treasure remains behind to be taken again by those with the courage. For strategically important lair sites, some Cult cells have fulfilled a ghost dragon's wishes in the past. They simply reclaim the treasure after the dragon passes on and use the lair for their own purposes. Most often, this is to provide a home to a "new" Cult dragon or dracolich that the Cult has recently recruited or created.

Dragon, Lesser Undead

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	<i>Zombie</i> Any land	<i>Skeleton</i> Any land
FREQUENCY:	Very rare	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any	Any
DIET:	None	None
INTELLIGENCE:	Non- (0)	Non- (0)
TREASURE:	Nil	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1	1
ARMOR CLASS:	Same as living dragon form	Same as living dragon form+1
MOVEMENT:	Half living form; no flight	Same as living form; no flight
HIT DICE:	Same as living+1	Same as living
THACO	Same as living	Same as living
NO. OF ATTACKS:	Same as living	Same as living
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	Same as living	Same as living
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Physical dragon attack forms not using flight; spell-like abilities of living form	Physical dragon attack forms not using flight; spell-like abilities of living form
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	All dragon type and age immunities from life; immune to <i>charm, hold, sleep, paralysis, and poison</i> ; save as priests of a level equal to their HD while living	All dragon type and age immunities from life; immune to <i>charm, hold, sleep, paralysis, and poison</i> ; save as priests of a level equal to their HD while living
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Same as living	Same as living
SIZE:	Same as living	Same as living
MORALE:	20	20
XP VALUE:	Varies	Varies

What does one do with the corpse of a dragon that failed to achieve dracolich status or one that foolishly perished in battle before the conversion could even be attempted? There's always dissecting the body to use the various pieces to create various magical items. But if one is a member of the Cult of the Dragon and does not wish to go to all that messy work or if one still has need of a fearsome, undead draconic warrior, then one can try to create a lesser form of dracolich, specifically a zombie or skeleton dragon.

In his work toward creating the ultimate undead dragon, the dracolich, Sannaster perfected several lesser forms of draconic undead as steps in his learning process. Two such undead forms are detailed here (as they are in Sannaster's *Tome of the Dragon*). These are the first two types Sannaster created and the easiest for modern Cult wizards to recreate today. The existence of other, more powerful forms of draconic undead is often hinted at by Cult necromancers, but no instances of such have ever been recorded.

A zombie dragon superficially resembles a dracolich. Its flesh is rotting and hangs in tatters from its bones, and it often has ripped and torn wing tissue. However, zombie dragons lack the evil fire of a dracolich in their eyes. Instead, the eyes of a zombie dragon are dull and dead and are often gone entirely, since the delicate tissue decays rapidly. The mindless dragon zombie cannot speak and can follow only the simplest commands.

Skeleton dragons are literally undead creatures formed from the animated skeleton of a dragon. They can also be mistaken for dracoliches, though they too lack the fire present in a dracolich's eyesockets. They are mindless, cannot speak, and can follow only relatively simple commands.



Combat: The dragon zombie is a ponderous creature that always strikes last in any round. Its movement rate is half that of its living form, and it cannot fly. When created, the dragon zombie has one more Hit Die than the dragon had in life, though this additional Hit Die has no effect on the age-related abilities of the creature. Zombie dragons possess the same Armor Class they had in life.

Skeleton dragons take only half damage from edged and piercing weapons and are immune to cold-based attacks. Skeleton dragons have the same number of Hit Dice and movement rate that they possessed in life, but they cannot fly. Their Armor Class is one better than their AC in life.

Lesser undead dragons generally have the same number of physical attacks and inflict the same amounts of damage as when they were living. However, since they are flightless, they cannot perform the snatch and stall dragon attacks. Like their living counterparts, they can divide their attacks between opponents. Lesser undead dragons do not retain the fear aura of their living dragon form, nor can they use that form's breath weapon.

Lesser undead dragons retain all the immunities that they possessed while alive. For example, a zombie or skeletal dragon that was old or older when it died is immune to normal missile weapons, as zombie and skeletal dragons of the red dragon species are immune to fire. In addition, lesser undead dragons retain any magic resistance they had while alive. Lesser undead dragons also have the standard undead immunities to *charm*, *hold*, and *sleep* enchantments and are immune to paralysis and poison. Lesser undead dragons also can detect invisible objects and beings and can use *clairaudience* in their lairs. Undead dragons save as priests of a level equal to their HD while living rather than as fighters. Clerical spells and other spells that specifically target undead affect lesser undead dragons normally. Lesser undead dragons are turned as "Special" undead, and holy water inflicts 2d4 points of damage upon them.

The dragon's innate spell-like abilities, if any are usable by the lesser undead form of the dragon despite its lack of intelligence. To a magical creature such as a dragon, using its spell-like abilities is as natural as biting or clawing its foe; it is an instinct, not a conscious decision. True spellcasting is, however, impossible for such mindless undead beings as listed here (unless an undead dragon has an *imbue undead with spell ability* spell cast upon it). It is theorized that other, more intelligent types of undead dragons—should they be proven to exist—might be able to cast spells as when they lived.

A *protection from evil* spell is ineffective against these lesser undead dragons (since they are neutral in alignment), but other spells relating to undead creatures or dragons may ward against them.

Habitat/Society: Zombie dragons and skeleton dragons are found at whatever posts they are stationed at by their creators or those assigned to direct them.

Creating either type of lesser undead dragon requires access to an *animate dead* spell as well as the corpse of an evil dragon of at least young age category or older to be animated

(and only evil dragons of sufficient age can be reanimated, as Sammaster discovered to his chagrin). To create a zombie dragon, a relatively intact dragon corpse (in other words, one with no missing limbs) is required and at least 75% of the body tissue must be present. To create a skeleton dragon, an intact dragon skeleton is not necessary; the skull, spine and claws of the dragon are the only pieces that are absolutely required. About 60% of the rest of the skeleton must also be present. (The bones of some other large creature may be substituted for bones missing from the dragon skeleton in the final animated form.) To prepare the corpse for animation takes 1 day in the case of a zombie dragon and 3 days in the case of a skeleton dragon. In addition, a piece of zombie flesh or a shard of a skeleton's bone must be added to an arcane elixir (contents to be determined by the DM) worth at least 500 gp to create a zombie dragon or 1,000 gp to create a skeleton dragon, and the elixir must be poured over the corpse before the *animate dead* spell is cast.

Finally, the dragon corpse receives a saving throw vs. spell as if it were still a living dragon of the appropriate type, but with a with a -4 penalty. (Magic resistance is ignored for this purpose.) If the saving throw is successful, the dragon is not reanimated and the preparation time and potion have been wasted. If the saving throw is not successful, the corpse is reanimated as the appropriate type of lesser undead dragon. Attempts to animate a dragon corpse which succeeded at its saving throw may be repeated, but the preparation time and the concoction and use of a new elixir must also be repeated. A force other than the spirit of the actual dead dragon provides the animation for zombie dragons and skeleton dragons; their actual spirits and minds pass into the afterlife with their deaths.

Ecology: Zombie dragons and skeleton dragons eat nothing and hunt nothing they have not been told to attack. They often serve as guardians for Cult of the Dragon meeting places or hidden treasures, and sometimes serve as eternally vigilant door guards for Cult dragons or dracoliches. They have no treasure of their own, though they may be allowed or assigned to remain near their former hoards in some cases. Though they do not project a living dragon's fear aura, animals of all sorts instinctively dislike them and will not approach them if given a choice. The only exception is carrion-eaters, who may, in the case of zombie dragons, hang about in the vicinity of the dragon occasionally to feast on bits of flesh the zombie has sloughed off.

	<i>Tribal</i>	<i>Cult of the Dragon</i>
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any land	Any land
FREQUENCY:	Very rare	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Tribe	Tribe
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any	Text
DIET:	Omnivore	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	See below	V
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	2d8	2d8
ARMOR CLASS:	3	3
MOVEMENT:	6, Fl 15 (B)	6, Fl 15 (B)
HIT DICE:	7	7
THAC0:	13	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2 or 1	2 or 1 (2 or 3 when airborne)
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	1d6/1d6 or by weapon	1d6/1d6 or by weapon plus 2d8 with rear-claw rake when airborne
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil	Nil
SIZE:	L (7-9 feet long including tail)	L (7-9 feet long including tail)
MORALE:	Champion (15-16)	Fanatic (17-18)
XP VALUE:	1,400	2,000

These creatures are rumored to be very distant cousins of dragons. Most dragon-kin live wild, and this type (which appears also in the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Annual Volume One*) is known as tribal dragon-kin. The Cult of the Dragon has managed to gain (or regain) control over a few dragon-kin tribes; it has been allowed to impose more discipline on dragon-kin society in exchange for teaching Cult dragon-kin additional combat skills and keeping key members of these tribes in power through judicious gifts of magical items.

Dragon-kin have developed bipedal humanoid characteristics, but they still possess a dragonlike face and wings, claws, a tail, horns, and a sort of mane/beard that certain dragons have. Their coloration ranges from a dark yellow ocher to a reddish brown with darker spots or bands. Most have green wings that lighten to gold or yellow, though some have wings that match their body coloration. All are covered in scales that are larger and rougher over their backs and tails, but more supple, though still tough, across their torsos and limbs. Their head horns are swept back and small, and function decoratively (and perhaps defensively to protect their skulls), not offensively.

Dragon-kin speak their own sibilant language (a corrupt dialect of Auld Wyrnish) and can speak a rough form of common as well.

Combat: When they expect combat, tribal dragon-kin take to the air so they can have the upper hand. They remain airborne as long as possible, then swoop down to rake their targets with their foreclaws.

All dragon-kin can *detect magic* at will, and tribal dragon-kin target beings carrying magical items over others, as their overriding instinct is to acquire these items. When a tribal dragon-kin notices a magical item, it tries to take it away from its holder and flee with it to its lair. If the dragon-kin makes a successful attack roll against the item (treat an item as AC 10, with bonuses [or penalties] to its Armor Class equal to any magical bonuses it has plus the holder's Dexterity bonuses), it seizes the item. A contest of Strength then commences between the dragon-kin and the item's owner. The first of the two to fail a Strength check (consider the dragon-kin to have a Str 13) loses his or her grip on the item. At the best opportunity, the dragon-kin then absconds with the item. Half of the time, it does not return to the fight, remaining in its cave instead to admire its newfound acquisition.

If forced to bring combat to the ground, all dragon-kin move in and use their claws or weapons, such as spears or pole arms, which they favor. Tribal dragon-kin are easily distracted by magical items, especially if one of them becomes "separated" from its owner. However, when

forced to fight on the ground, they are not as likely to flee from combat if they can wrest a magical item from its owner. Unless they can do so without fear of retaliation, they will stay and resolve the combat. They are smart enough to guard against back attacks and never, under any circumstance, allow themselves to be attacked from such a disadvantageous position if it can possibly be avoided.

Tribal dragon-kin never use their captured magical items in combat for fear of losing them. This is viewed as their biggest disadvantage, for they are forced instead to rely on mundane weapons or their claws. This, unfortunately for the dragon-kin, makes them easy targets for those with experience in fighting aerial creatures. Cult dragon-kin, however, use any magical items suitable for combat in combat, especially those that have been given to them by their Cult allies.

Cult dragon-kin also feel the pull of magical items, but their training allows them to overcome their acquisitive instincts in favor of their mission. However, if they feel they can justify seizing a magical item in pursuit of whatever duty they have been assigned, they do so without hesitation using the above procedure. Unless the item is a simple weapon they can immediately use (such as a spear, pole arm, or sword), they keep the item and continue the fight.

When airborne, Cult dragon-kin attack with both their foreclaws and also rake with their back claws. The rear-claw attack is a single rake with both rear claws that inflicts 2d8 points of damage on a successful hit. Cult dragon-kin have also been trained to use missile weapons such as bows or javelins while aloft.

Habitat/Society: Dragon-kin normally live in a tribal setting. Their leader is determined by combat and ownership of the most powerful magical items. Any leader defeated in combat, but not killed, is eliminated and replaced by the tribe.

If an adventuring party should happen into a dragon-kin den, its members will find half of the residents left to protect what is theirs. If these are defeated, there are 1d2 nonpermanent magical items (for example, potions) per resident dragon-kin. There is a cumulative 10% chance per resident that a permanent magical item is in the batch. Hence, a lair of six has a 60% chance of containing a permanent item, and there is always at least one permanent item in a lair of 10 or more.

Dragon-kin are often found in the service of a powerful Cult dragon or mage. Unless magically compelled, most dragon-kin refuse to serve a dracolich. Regardless of their master (if any), dragon-kin retain their dragon-kin urge to collect magical treasure. This very likely is the reason many tribes agree to work with Cult members, who offer them all sorts of (mostly worthless) magical treasure.

Cult dragon-kin are allowed by their Cult masters to keep quite a few of the magical items they acquire so long as they turn their acquisitions over to the Cult to be examined first. Any seized magical items the Cult deems it necessary to keep are paid for through gifts of nonpermanent magical items (such as potions), simple weapons the Cult feels present its forces with a tactical advantage, and magical gewgaws that look impressive but are actually the recipients of such spells as *Nystul's magical aura*.

Ecology: Tribal dragon-kin are a blight on any area's ecology. They have no regard for others and simply take what they want. They have no natural predators, although there is a large bounty for them in any place that has known their depredations. They eat nearly anything that can be chewed, although they prefer meat, especially that of sentient beings, since they like to torment their food.

Unlike their larger cousins, tribal dragon-kin have no love of conventional treasure. If a hoard has no magic, they are not interested in it. Tribal dragon-kin simply leave coins and nonmagical items where they lie. There is a 50% chance that tribal dragon-kin will attack a party if it is not carrying magical items. They always attack those who carry such items.

Cult dragon-kin are more disciplined and are fierce fighters for the Cult cause. They obey their Cult masters willingly for the promise of wealth and magic. They have learned to value mundane wealth somewhat for the occasional items or services of use that it can buy. Cult dragon-kin eat only meat except in extreme circumstances. Aside from sentient species, who the Cult is trying to discourage them from preying on (it attracts too much attention), they seem to prefer the taste of deer, pheasants, other wild game, and goats.

Mantidrake

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any		
FREQUENCY:	Very rare		
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary		
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any		
DIET:	Carnivore		
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)		
TREASURE:	Nil (E)		
ALIGNMENT:	Black: CE; Blue: LE; Green: LE; Red: CE; White: CE; Brown: NE; Yellow: CE		
NO. APPEARING:	1d2		
ARMOR CLASS:	Black: 1; Blue: 0; Green: 0; Red: -3; White: 1; Brown: 2; Yellow: 0		
MOVEMENT:	12, Fl 18 (E)		
HIT DICE:	6+3		
THACO:	13		
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3		
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	1d3/1d3/1d10 (claw/claw/bite)		
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Breath weapon, tail spikes		
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to breath weapon of dragon parent and like attacks (spells, etc.)		
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil		
SIZE:	H (25 feet long)		
MORALE:	Elite (13-14)		
XP VALUE:	Black	3,000	White 3,000
	Blue	4,000	Brown 3,000
	Green	4,000	Yellow 4,000
	Red	4,000	



The mantidrake is the offspring of a manticore and an evil dragon. It looks like a scaled manticore, with dragonlike wings and a dragon's head instead of a manlike one. When seen at a distance or by an inexperienced observer, it could well be mistaken for a normal manticore or for a Karatman li lung (earth dragon).

The mantidrake has the same lionlike mane around its head that a manticore has. Its coloration is a blend of the color of its dragon parent and the tan and brown of a normal manticore, with its head, wings, hindquarters, face, and belly scales generally reflecting the dragon parent's coloration and the remainder of the beast being shades of tan and brown, sometimes with stripes or spots of the dragon parent's color.

Wild mantidrakes speak the language of the parent that reared them (usually their mother), with some halting knowledge of the language of their other parent if that parent was involved in their upbringing. Those mantidrakes raised from birth by the Cult of the Dragon normally know common and the language of their dragon parent.

Combat: The mantidrake opens combat (preferably from ambush or from the air) with a volley of 1d6 tail spikes (180-yard range, as a light crossbow): Each of these spikes causes 1d6 points of damage. This attack can be used four times per day, since the spikes regrow quickly. Then the mantidrake closes for melee, using a claw/claw/bite routine.

Its breath weapon is the most potent attack form of all, but the mantidrake generally does not use it unless the need is vital, as it inherited enough sense from its draconic parent to know when not to waste its effects. Damage done by the mantidrake's breath weapon is equal to the beast's normal hit point total, and it can use its breath weapon up to four times a day. Breath weapon damage does not vary as the beast is wounded or healed over time, and magical effects that artificially boost hit points do not make the breath weapon more powerful.

The mantidrake is immune to attack forms that resemble its breath weapon. Finally, mantidrakes do not suffer any additional damage or effects from weapons or items specifically designed to kill dragons.

Because it is such a clumsy flier, the mantidrake avoids aerial combat if possible, or at least restricts itself to long-range attacks with its breath weapon and tail spikes.

Dragon

Parent Breath Weapon

Black Jet of acid 5 feet wide, 60 feet long; victim takes half damage if successful save vs. breath weapon is made.

- Blue Bolt of lightning 5 feet wide, 100 feet long; save for half.
- Green Cloud of chlorine gas 50 feet long, 40 feet wide, and 30 feet high; half damage if save is made vs. breath weapon.
- Red Cone of fire 5 feet at mouth, 90 feet long, 30 feet wide at cone's widest; half damage if save is made.
- White Cone of frost 5 feet wide, 70 feet long, 25 feet wide at cone's widest; half damage if save is made vs. breath weapon.
- Brown Jet of acid 5 feet wide, 60 feet long; victim takes half damage if successful save vs. breath weapon is made.
- Yellow Blast of scorching air and sand 50 feet long, 40 feet wide, and 20 feet high; half damage if save is made vs. breath weapon.

Habitat/Society: Like their manticore parents, mantidrakes can be found in any climatic region, though they prefer warm lands to cool ones. Among other things, this means that its dragon parent is likely to be a warm-weather-loving dragon, such as a blue, brown, or yellow dragon.

Those mantidrakes that have escaped the control of the Cult of the Dragon are solitary brutes in the wild, with each individual having a hunting territory of at least 25 square miles. Besides having a ravenous appetite, they also like to collect treasure, a habit inherited from their dragon parents. When more than one mantidrake is encountered in the wild, they are a mated pair. Mantidrakes, like manticores, mate for life.

Mantidrakes can be trained by Cult of the Dragon members only if taken from their parents shortly after birth. (The only relationship wild mantidrakes may develop with other creatures is a partnership, and even that lasts only if the partnership results in plenty of food and treasure for the mantidrake.) They often serve to protect the area of a Cult cell, hide-out, or lair. They also prove to be a distraction for any curious people who venture too close to what the Cult is seeking to protect or hide.

Ecology: A wild mantidrake lives much as its manticore parent would. It favors human flesh above all others, though it will eat any living creature in order to survive. If a mantidrake has to live in an area smaller than 25 square miles, that region is soon devoid of large animal and human life, as those creatures not killed and eaten flee. Cult mantidrakes can be stabled for use as (clumsy) mounts. The curiously supple hide of a mantidrake is worth 5,000 gp.

Ur-Histachii (Undead)

Cult of the Dragon

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CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tropical jungles or subterranean areas beneath tropical regions
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Band
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Nocturnal
DIET:	None
INTELLIGENCE:	Semi- (2-4)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	2d8
ARMOR CLASS:	6
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	4+2
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	1d4/1d4/1d3
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Berserker rage
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to <i>hold</i> , <i>charm</i> , <i>sleep</i> , and cold-based spells, death magic, and poison
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (5-6 feet tall)
MORALE:	Fearless (19-20)
XP VALUE:	420

The necromancers of the Cult of the Dragon's cell in and under the Vilhon Reach's city of Hlondeth have created this undead perversion. Ur-histachii are made from histachii, which are yuan-ti-created abominations formed from unfortunate humans who are forced to drink a specially brewed elixir (discussed in the entry on histachii in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* tome).

Like its living counterparts, an ur-histachii is hairless, and its skin is a mottled gray to gray-black in color, often with patches of green or yellow mold growing from old, open wounds. A small reptilian head-fin starts atop the undead creature's skull and grows down its back as a spinal ridge that ends at the tip of the ur-histachii's vestigial tail. An ur-histachii's undead eyes are empty sockets filled by blackness, and a scabrous reptilian tongue flicks out between its broken teeth in an instinctual effort to taste the air it no longer breathes. Ur-histachii emit a faint scent of rust and acid, along with that of musty decay.

Ur-histachii do not speak, per se, vocalizing only grunts and broken hisses, but understand the commands of their creators and other yuan-ti so long as they are spoken in common or the yuan-ti tongue.

Combat: Ur-histachii attack any nonreptile that enters their sensory range. They can see, hear, smell, taste, and touch just as well as a living histachii despite their apparent lack of visual organs. They also have 90-foot infravision. All but mindless, ur-histachii simply charge any such creatures that come within range, attacking with their filthy claws and teeth. Cult necromancers have somehow given the ur-histachii the ability to enter berserk rages up to three times in a 24-hour day. To induce an ur-histachii to become berserk requires a nonreptile to inflict some direct damage upon it. (For instance, a mage casting a *magic missile* would not trigger a berserk rage, though the ur-histachii would react to the attack. If that same mage stabbed an ur-histachii with his dagger, the ur-histachii would enter a berserk rage—provided it had not done so already three times that day.) The berserk rage of an ur-histachii grants it +2 bonuses to attack and damage rolls plus a +2 bonus to AC for 3d4 rounds.

Like most undead, ur-histachii are immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells, death magic, poisons, and cold-based spells. Holy water does 2d4 points of damage to an ur-histachii. Ur-histachii are turned as shadows.

Habitat/Society: The ur-histachii are known to exist only within the Cult of the Dragon's cell beneath the city of Hlondeth, where the Cult necromancers and their yuan-ti associates use these undead creatures to guard important caches, secret meetings, and—since they require neither food nor air—sealed crypts and subterranean



mausoleums. A few ur-histachii also have been teleported on occasion to the homes or courts of Cult enemies where the enemies' guards are sure to incite a berserk rage from the ur-histachii. Thus far, these teleported ur-histachii have served as undead assassins or as diversions for other Cult activities involving that particular foe.

To make one or more ur-histachii requires at least one to three days, during which time the histachii to be transformed are slain in a hideous ritual, the necromancers performing the procedure perform other obscene rituals and incantations, and several expensive unguents and decoctions are poured over the corpses. No more than eight ur-histachii can be made at once due to the stress of the procedure on the lead necromancer performing the transformation.

The accelerated rage ability of ur-histachii appears to burn the undead bodies of ur-histachii out quickly. Few ur-histachii exist for more than one year, and to date, none have existed more than five years past their transformation into ur-histachii.

Ecology: Ur-histachii need eat nothing to exist, though residual impulses of their previous life as carnivores sometimes result in their idly chewing on carrion or catching and chewing rats, worms, other vermin, and yuan-ti leftovers, if such are left within their reach or enter their sensory range. Ur-histachii are different from many of the nonsentient undead in that they often grunt and hiss to themselves, "remembering" to be quiet, like most undead creatures, only when specifically instructed (or reminded) to do so by their creators or other yuan-ti. Yuan-ti find their presence and their lack of restraint annoying, like a persistent itch, and so rarely place them where they need often interact with them. Ur-histachii never guard yuan-ti brood chambers; apparently, their masters fear they will "forget" and eat the broodlings.

Wyvern Drake

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate mountains and forests																
FREQUENCY:	Very rare																
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary																
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Dusk and dawn																
DIET:	Carnivore																
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)																
TREASURE:	Nil (E)																
ALIGNMENT:	Black: CE; Blue: LE; Green: LE; Red: CE; White: CE; Brown: NE; Yellow: CE																
NO. APPEARING:	1d3																
ARMOR CLASS:	Black: 1; Blue: 0; Green: 0; Red: -3; White: 1; Brown: 2; Yellow: 0																
MOVEMENT:	6, Fl 24 (E)																
HIT DICE:	8+7																
THACO:	11																
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2																
DAMAGE/ATTACKS:	2d10/1d8 (bite/stinger)																
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Breath weapon, poison; surprise, bombing																
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to breath weapon of dragon parent and like attacks (spells, etc.)																
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil																
SIZE:	G (45 feet long)																
MORALE:	Elite (13-14)																
XP VALUE:	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Black</td> <td>9,000</td> <td>White</td> <td>9,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Blue</td> <td>10,000</td> <td>Brown</td> <td>9,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Green</td> <td>10,000</td> <td>Yellow</td> <td>10,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Red</td> <td>10,000</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Black	9,000	White	9,000	Blue	10,000	Brown	9,000	Green	10,000	Yellow	10,000	Red	10,000		
Black	9,000	White	9,000														
Blue	10,000	Brown	9,000														
Green	10,000	Yellow	10,000														
Red	10,000																



Yellow Blast of scorching air and sand 50 feet long, 40 feet wide, and 20 feet high; half damage if save is made vs. breath weapon.

The wyvern drake is, as its name implies, a cross between a dragon and a wyvern. It is 45 feet long (half of that is tail), with a 60-foot wingspan and a yard-long stinger at the end of its tail. Its body, limbs, and wings have the same color ranges as that of wyverns, from a dark brown to gray. A wyvern drake's 5-foot head is colored similar to its dragon parent, though its eyes often have red or orange swirls or patterns in the iris, a remnant of the normal wyvern eye color.

Besides a wyvern's hissing and roaring calls, the wyvern drake can also speak the tongue of its dragon parent and the common tongue, along with one or two other languages that it learns or is taught. Those wyvern drakes raised from birth by the Cult of the Dragon normally know common, the language of their dragon parent, and perhaps a local tongue or the language of a humanoid race the Cult deals with.

Combat: Having more intelligence than a normal wyvern, the wyvern drake is a highly dangerous foe. It always fights in the open if it can, invariably attacking from the air. In addition to doing physical damage, the scorpionlike tail also injects Type F poison, killing the victim unless it saves vs. poison. The tail stinger can hit an enemy in any direction, so long as it is within reach. The clever wyvern drake can also pick up a smaller foe, carry it high into the air, then drop it (inflicting normal falling damage), or else pick up objects such as boulders and drop them onto foes (-2 on attack rolls, but inflicting 1d10 points of damage on a hit).

The wyvern drake also fights with a breath weapon inherited from its dragon parent usable three times per day. Damage done by the wyvern drake's breath weapon is equal to the beast's normal hit point total. This damage does not vary as the beast is wounded or healed over time.

Dragon

Parent Breath Weapon

Black	Jet of acid 5 feet wide, 60 feet long; victim takes half damage if successful save vs. breath weapon is made.
Blue	Bolt of lightning 5 feet wide, 100 feet long; save for half.
Green	Cloud of chlorine gas 50 feet long, 40 feet wide, and 30 feet high; half damage if save is made vs. breath weapon.
Red	Cone of fire 5 feet at mouth, 90 feet long, 30 feet wide at cone's widest; half damage if save is made.
White	Cone of frost 5 feet wide, 70 feet long, 25 feet wide at cone's widest; half damage if save is made vs. breath weapon.
Brown	Jet of acid 5 feet wide, 60 feet long; victim takes half damage if successful save vs. breath weapon is made.

The wyvern drake is immune to attack forms that resemble its breath weapon. Wyvern drakes do not suffer any additional damage or effects from weapons or items specifically designed to kill dragons.

Wyvern drakes prefer to use their breath weapon instead of relying on physical combat when fighting an aerial opponent. Still, their stings are useful in a dogfight, as they can arch over their backs to strike opponents in front of them.

When stalking prey, the wyvern drake uses cunning. Neither sound nor shadow alert victims that they are being followed, and the attacking wyvern drake achieves a -2 penalty on the victim's surprise roll due to its silent dive to the attack. Though it will not attack an enemy that is obviously too powerful for it, a group of humans will be attacked if the beast is hungry enough.

Habitat/Society: The wild wyvern drake prefers to live alone, staying with another of its kind only for the few months it takes to birth and rear its young to a fledgling state. It lairs on mountains or cliffs overlooking forests or plains, particularly those containing caravan or migration routes. Its average hunting ground is about 25 square miles in size, but it can travel 150 miles in a single day and back again in its search for food. Unlike ordinary wyverns, wyvern drakes never fight their own kind except when there is absolutely nothing else around to eat. Wyvern drakes hoard treasure just as dragons do.

Cult of the Dragon wyvern drakes are often used as aerial scouts and as airborne attack platforms. Most are trained to accept Cult members as riders.

Ecology: The wyvern drake eats the equivalent of a cow or horse per day. It swallows victims whole once combat is finished, without chewing, and only the bones and any metal or stone items on the corpse are not digested. (It cannot swallow prey whole in melee.) Carrion is regarded as a food of last resort. Wyvern drakes have few natural enemies, though other large territorial predators will attack them if they consider them to have invaded their ranges.



Vengeance is mine! I have destroyed Sussethila-sis! I rule as Suzerain of Anauroch! The first step of my destiny is fulfilled! Glory and power are mine!

The events of the past few days are surely without compare in all the history of my kind. Not a day after my humiliating defeat at the claws of the pretender and his human accessory I drank down the magically toxic draft that was the key to true power and glory. Namirra had returned as promised, bearing with him the potion that I was to consume along with an otherwise unremarkable sapphire that, he stated, would become my "host" or the repository of my spirit should any ill ever befall my immortal form. I do not fear the mention of such here in my records as my massive hoard now incorporates the former suzerain's as well as mine own. The number of sapphires I now rest my immortal shape upon is nigh-countless, and they all now radiate magic thanks to Namirra. I defy any to even hope to pinpoint the one critical to me.

Indescribable pain wracked my form after I quaffed the magical elixir. I convulsed from the horrible agony. As the potion worked its way through my already weak and damaged frame, I felt every iota of my being burn with the purifying flames of transformation and power. Every sensation of that terrible and awesome infinity of pain is burned indelibly into my

being for all time. Never can a mere wound bring me low again, as no wound, no mortal pain, no mere living agony can touch me in my altered form, and all pale before that transforming experience.

While the draft completed its dire and portentous work, I lost focus on the pain as the potion and the effects it induced clouded my brain and dimmed my psyche. Soon, the torment was but a roaring within my skull as I felt my spirit, my very soul, soar free from its mortal confines. I looked down upon my slumped form and felt for the briefest of instants some minor measure of the awe and terror I have inflicted on so many foes over the greater than half-dozen centuries of my life— or, rather, my previous life. All too soon, the marvelous vision of my physical form was taken from me as I found my consciousness now residing in some infinite-yet-bounded deep blue realm. Of course, I soon realized I was somehow aware of my host while my spirit rested in its multifaceted confines. The time I spent there is quite difficult to adequately describe, much less experience; suffice it to say that I contented myself with constructing and reconstructing the perfect plan by which I would gain my revenge against the pretender.

After an unknown length of time, I felt compelled to leave behind my realm of perfect blue, though my psyche left its indelible mark upon the structure of the





gem. Slowly, almost painfully, I again became aware of the physical world, the world that, until my transformation, I had considered to be the only world. The only sensation this experience can be compared to is that of my hatching so long ago. This was a birth, as well, as I first became aware of my physical form, my limbs, my wings, my long serpentine neck atop which my eyes now struggled to open. Reacquainting my mind and spirit with my body took some time, but when I had again mastered myself, Namirra was there. My friend stood over me smiling as full consciousness returned to me.

No sooner had my vision cleared than I knew I was changed, different, better. Power the likes of which even I had never before known flowed through me. Strangely, my senses retained a vestige of their expanded capacities from the sapphire realm. Not only did I see, hear, and smell Namirra, but I somehow also sensed him to be intensely alive. Further I sensed every living thing within my home, down to the last vermin scuttling away in fear of me. Namirra then instructed me on the changes my body had undergone during its metamorphosis, the details of which I will not expound upon now—my deeds soon showed my now-invincible form's potent abilities.

After a few more cautious, Namirra gifted me with items from the Cult, items to aid me in my vengeance against Sussethilaris. Thus girded for battle, I flew forth to seize my rightful place amongst my kind. I bearded the simple-minded fool in his very lair upon his own throne-hoard. The feeble magical defenses that ringed the coward availed him little as their blasting magic ran ineffectually down my invincible form like water or blood. I attacked savagely after telling Sussethilaris that his reign was over and he looked his final doom in the eyes. . . .

—From the magical Libram of Recording of Malvgris, very old blue dracolich of southern Anauroch, circa 1365 DR

Cult Campaigns & Adventures

"In conclusion, the Cult of the Dragon is a potent force for evil in the Realms, and the Harpers and all good-hearted beings must be ready to stand against its cells' plots and schemes, regardless of the forms they take.

"The time to strike, in the opinion of this humble seer, is now. Many cells of the Cult are beset by enemies on all sides; many of these foes are at least as dangerous and evil as the Cult itself. Should any one of these factions succeed in acquiring control over the majority of Cult resources, the balance of power in Faerûn could radically shift.

"Defeating such a widespread and fractious organization is no simple task, but a time of crisis seems to be approaching for the Cult, and the heroic forces of Faerûn must act to see that Sammaster's followers are either destroyed or dispersed before others can conquer or subsume them and use the Cult's considerable resources to leverage themselves to new levels of power."

—Oracle Veshal Questa,

Sibylite of Savras and Harper,

from her report to Belluar Thantarth, 1370 DR

Incorporating the Cult Into Your Campaign

The Cult of the Dragon can play as large a role in a FORGOTTEN REALMS game setting campaign as one wishes. The Cult also can play almost any villainous role in the game: a source of occult horror, an organized crime syndicate, or a spy network with its extensive tendrils hidden just beneath the surface of an otherwise normal-seeming society. The Cult is fractious, and this nature lends itself easily to Dungeon Masters adapting the Cult to suit their own campaigns. DMs can take what they like from this product and ignore the rest; they can change the names and places and even the dates if that is what best fits their campaigns. A terrific example of the Cult in action is found in the *Spellfire* novel by Ed Greenwood. It is from many of the scenes in that book that much of the horrific inspiration for this product has come.

At its heart though, the Cult is a group of power-hungry men and women who are using the insane teachings of a mad wizard to create and use undead creatures in order to conquer the world. Consider the image of an army of Cult undead, countless legions of zombies and skeletons marching toward the borders of Cormyr, with Cult necromancers atop their flying dracolich mounts leading their lifeless minions onward to battle. Every soldier who dies fighting these undead creatures knows she or he will be raised soon thereafter and added to the ranks of the very army the soldier had just died to stop. Such an image is an incredible, horrifying sight and could be the inspiration for many exciting, terrifying game adventures.

The Cult as a Covert Organization

Incorporating the Cult of the Dragon into an AD&D campaign can be accomplished in one of two ways: by using a premade Cult cell or making one up. The first requires adding one of the Cult cells included in this book to one's game. Of course, DMs should change as many details as they feel necessary to make such cells fit their campaign (and to differentiate them for any players who may have read this book). Change a cell's location, its leaders, their levels (or just their names), incorporate local, pre-existing evil NPCs into the cell's organization to provide a link from the PCs to the Cult, adjust the cell's size and relative strength (again to fit the campaign), and finally, modify the cell's stated plots or



create new plots for the cell to pursue. One easy way to bring the PCs into conflict with the Cult is to put them at cross purposes over similar people, items, or other concrete objectives, thus ensuring that they will clash eventually.

Creating a Cult Cell

The second method, creating a Cult cell, guarantees the players will not already be familiar with the material, but also requires more work on the DM's part. When creating any organization, such as a Cult cell, a DM needs to lay a good foundation for building that organization. A good foundation is built around six question words: who, what, when, where, why, and how. When a DM can answer all six of these questions with regard to his or her creation (the Cult cell in this case), she or he is ready to start adding on to the creation through play and the feedback of players and their PCs.

Who: *Who* defines all the important members of the Cult cell. Such nonplayer characters include not only the cell's leader(s), but the most influential members of each character class within the cell (the most powerful mage, cleric, fighter, thief, etc.), the secret spies the cell has working for them, all those who take bribes or otherwise work with the cell, and perhaps most importantly, the NPCs who, in the DM's estimation, have the highest probability of encountering his or her game's PCs. These NPCs should be of a level roughly equivalent to that of the PCs, depending upon whether a DM considers these NPCs to be long-term foes (in which case the should be able to withstand a frontal assault by the PCs) or disposable, intended only to pique the PCs' interests and bring the PCs into the DM's Cult plots.

Certainly, detailing this many NPCs, even for a small local cell, is a lot of preparatory work for a DM. All these NPCs need not be fully fleshed out immediately. The cell's leaders and those NPCs whom the PCs are most likely to interact with should be the most detailed ahead of time (level, race, class, hp, AC, weapons, spells, looks, personality), but many of the other Cult members—those that will remain offstage at least for a time—can be handled with a few quick notes. Recording the NPCs' ties to the Cult and the community, their position and purpose in the cell, and some identifying habits is enough. These habits are more for a DM's use as a memory aid now than for the PCs, but when it comes time for the player characters to discover the local noble—who is always chewing smoke weed—is actually in the employ of the Cult, the PCs can find telltale signs of his brownish yellow spittle on the ground where he has recently met with a Cultist for payment.

What: *What* is the next question a DM needs to answer. What is this cell's size? What is the Cult cell doing here? What are its current plots? What are its future plans? What does the cell do to attract the attention of the PCs? What will the Cultists do when they learn the PCs have discovered at least some aspect of their illicit activities in the area? What access to Cult magics and creatures, specifically dragons and dracoliches, does the cell have? What other resources can the cell call upon? These questions are a good beginning; DMs have others to answer as well.

When: *When* questions apply a timeframe of reference for the Cult cell within the campaign. When did this cell begin? When did it take its current form (leadership, plots, etc.)? When did Cult activities begin in the "offstage" campaign? (In other words, has the cell just begun operating or has it existed for a time and the PCs will only learn of it soon?) When will the PCs learn of the Cult cell's existence as such (as opposed to just a ring of blackmailers, thieves, or cutthroats)? When can the cell be defeated, if ever? (This again depends on how long a DM wants the Cult to serve as an antagonist in the campaign.)

Keep in mind that many of these questions can be answered not only with specific dates and times, but also with generalities based on the PCs' accomplishments. If a DM does not desire the PCs to uncover the true purpose of the cell until they have reached 5th level, for example, that is a perfectly valid answer to the question of when PCs will uncover the cell's true purpose.

Where: *Where* questions provide a geographical context for the Cult cell. Where does the cell meet regularly? (Some secret locale?) Where else do Cultists congregate at other times (inns, taverns, isolated glades, abandoned barns, burned-out temples, etc.)? Where do important Cult members live? Where does the cell keep its treasures? Where do its members hide their caches of weapons and spellbooks? Where do the cell's magical creatures, dragons, or dracoliches live? Where do these creatures feed? Where do the PCs go that they might come across something or someone that could lead to the discovery of the cell's existence?

Why: *Why* questions determine the underlying motives for the cell's existence in the campaign area. Why is the cell operating where it is at this time? Some advantage or plan must exist—find one. Why is the cell doing what it is doing? "For evil" is an insufficient answer to this question. Find a specific campaign- or PC-related reason. Is the cell trying to resurrect Sammaster, entice an evil dragon in the area into becoming a dracolich, or attempting to infiltrate an area that has thus far resisted its overtures?

How: *How* relates back to many of the questions asked previously and helps to define the cell's purpose, motive, and direction. How will the cell execute its plans? How does the cell make money to bribe officials and any dragons in the area? How does the cell plan to deal with any interference it might encounter (from PCs or others)? How will the cell gather the required ingredients for a dracolich potion when and if it needs one? How does the cell make use of its magical creatures and servitor undead (if any)?

Developing Further: The particular questions noted here are just the beginning; once a DM is used to this approach many more questions will come to mind to help define the Cult in a specific campaign. Once a DM lays the foundations by answering these kinds of questions, she or he can assign the information she or he has generated into useful categories, such as the background (what, why, when, where), leaders (who), and plots (what, how, where, when, why) categories that are used to describe the Cult cells detailed in The Cult Today chapter, and move on to crafting an air of mystery to make this Cult cell a truly covert organization.



Creating Mystery

Because the Cult of the Dragon is a secret society nestled beneath the surface fabric of the Realms, maintaining an air of mystery surrounding it and its activities is essential. Once DMs lay down the foundation for the Cult in their campaigns, they are ready to seamlessly slip the Cult into their campaigns.

To run a game that involves mysteries, a DM must have full knowledge and complete familiarity with the subject central to the mystery. In this case, this subject is the Cult. Nothing kills a mystery faster than a DM who does not have all the facts regarding it. How many times has a DM been caught off-guard by an insightful player's question and had to make up an answer on the spot, only to have that answer contradict a previously established fact in the campaign? Far too often. That is why a DM should nail down as many particulars as possible ahead of time. This keeps the game moving, and more importantly moving in the direction the DM has intended it.

Once a DM decides upon all the Cult's plots and has the PCs ready to begin uncovering them, she or he must decide on how best to reveal those plots. A good mystery is like an onion in that both are composed of layers upon layers of material. Peel away one layer, and the PCs should discover it leads them to the next layer, which leads them to the next, and the next.

A simple example of this follows. The local Cult cell is blackmailing a town official with proof of his romantic indiscretions. The official, out of money with which to bribe the Cult, asks the PCs for help. When the PCs investigate the blackmailers (first layer), they determine that they are Cultists (second layer). This discovery draws the PCs deeper until they learn that the Cult cell plans to use the money to buy arms and magic to attack a nearby caravan route (third layer). This route, the PCs eventually learn, is used by the Zhentarim for black-market shipments (fourth layer). The Cult hopes to hijack enough Zhent goods to accumulate enough money from their illicit sale to obtain the ingredients for a dracolich potion to be given to a nearby evil dragon (fifth layer) so that the dracolich will aid the cell in conquering the entire campaign region (sixth layer).

Now finding out all this information could take months of game time and (at least) weeks of playing time. Three primary methods exist for PCs to unearth each layer in a mystery—to find the clues pointing to the next layer of the plot—though each has many variants.

The first method requires the use of the PCs' skills, abilities, and nonweapon proficiencies. Plant clues that characters, with successful ability or skill rolls and intelligent decision-making, can find. Remember that any one clue seldom solves an entire puzzle any more than one piece completes a puzzle. While investigating the blackmailers, for example, the PCs could find a Cult symbol on a dagger that was thrown at the town official. Do not tell the PCs that the dagger is inscribed with the symbol of Cult of the Dragon; simply describe the symbol. If the players do not recognize it, then the PCs have more investigating to do to discover what the symbol means.

The second method for PCs to uncover clues is for them to develop and use a network of friends, confidantes, and informants. Doing this requires role-playing, but high Charisma scores can make this task easier. (Most television watchers

should be familiar with police dramas where the officers go to an informant to find out what is really going on.) Unless informants are somehow indebted to the PCs, they will desire some form of compensation for the information they reveal. This serves the additional benefit of draining away extra cash the PCs may possess. Also, keep in mind that not every contact is going to have information on every topic the PCs will want to investigate in the course of a campaign. The blacksmith who is a retired sergeant in the army is not going to know the same details as a member of the local thieves' guild, who is not going to know what the local sage has expertise in. The PCs may have to work through several of their contacts (and quite a bit of money) before they find someone who can (and is willing to) identify the symbol on the above-mentioned dagger as that of the Cult.

The third form of clue discovery is suggested for use here only when the PCs are unlucky enough to suffer frustration with both of the above options. This option is serendipity: A dying man whispers a clue (just the one needed by the stymied PCs) with his last breath, the PC spellcaster's divination spell pays off in a big way, or the characters somehow gain a second chance to re-examine an area or person for clues they missed the first time due to bad dice rolling or thick-headedness. However, serendipity is used far too often in many games and should be resorted to only when all plausible efforts and options on the part of the PCs have obviously been exhausted.

This points out another aspect of mystery creation in games: No guarantee exists that the PCs will find a single, all-important clue that a DM has left them (unless a DM is tragically obvious in the way that such a clue is presented—such as repeating its location four times in the description of a room). If the PCs are unfortunate enough to miss that crucial clue, then both they and the DM are stuck. The PCs' pursuit of the Cult's insidious plot grinds to a halt, and the DM is wracking his or her brain for ways to get the players back on track without blowing the mystery wide open and spoiling all his or her work at layering this mystery deep into the fabric of the campaign.

The solution to preventing the problem is simple: Do not hinge an entire storyline on the PCs finding one clue. Implementing this solution means weaving more clues into the story than the PCs will likely find. Dice, being the random factors that they are, ensure that some of the clues a DM plants go unnoticed by the PCs, and the differing thought processes of individuals will account for yet others being overlooked. If the PCs do not examine the dagger from the above-mentioned example, they can find the Cult symbol on the necklace of an enforcer sent by the Cult to silence the local official for good and subsequently killed by the PCs.

Creating and running a good mystery in a game setting is not as difficult as it looks, it just requires a bit more preparation than many Dungeon Masters may be used to making. But investing the time and effort shows in one's game, one's storylines, and in making the Cult of the Dragon the secret menace it should be. Remember that the Harpers have been trying to wipe out the Cult for a long time—a particular set of PCs should not immediately succeed where the best and brightest of the Realms have failed for centuries.



Adventure Nuggets

Here are a selection of adventure ideas involving the Cult of the Dragon. None are full adventures, but they instead serve to trigger a DM's imagination. DMs should mine these ideas for situations they can use and change and ignore those they cannot.

The Ultimate Spy

One of the members of the local Cult cell is not what she or he seems. The creature is, in truth, a greater doppelganger, an exceptional member of that shapechanging race. Greater doppelgangers often seek to place themselves in positions of responsibility or power, the better to aid their race in overcoming the native populations of Faerûn. This doppelganger has done just that. It assassinated a high-ranking member of the Cult and is currently impersonating him or her, all the while subtly directing the actions of the Cult toward its own private goals or objectives.

The PCs may or may not discover this. They may or may not know the Cult leader has been replaced by an impostor. They may not even know that their friend the blacksmith (armorer, farmer, uncle, etc.) was a member of the Cult. They may simply find his body half-buried in the woods where the greater doppelganger left it to rot. When they return to town and see their friend the blacksmith hammering away on a piece of hot metal on his anvil, they will know something demands their attention.

St. Sammaster

Sammaster has begun the process of apotheosis (divine ascension). He currently stands as a demipower and has begun answering the whispered prayers of Cultists across Faerûn. The true believers in the Cult, those who trust in the prophecies of the First-Speaker, rejoice, seeing this both as proof of the validity of Sammaster's teachings and as an omen that the downfall of the other races is imminent. Only a push or two on the part of the Cult is needed to cause their total collapse.

This causes Cult cells far and wide to erupt into violence. Terrorism and coup attempts surge as the faithful work to hasten the rise of the dead dragons. Dracoliches and evil Cult-affiliated dragons all fly forth from their hidden caves and grottoes to visit destruction on capitals, caravans, and all other symbols of current civilization.

Further, with the exception of a few greedy, power-hungry, and skeptical Cult leaders, all the cells of the Cult are coming together under the banner of their founder, blessed now with genuine divinity and able to fill the vacuum of clerical power that has plagued the Cult since the Banite purge.

However, all is not this simple, either for Sammaster or his devout followers. While Sammaster is a divine being now, he is not as independent as he seems. Behind all the religious and destructive fervor lies the church of Tiamat. The Dark Queen herself is behind Sammaster's ascension, though of course this remains her secret. Tiamat supplied enough divine energy to do for Sammaster what four centuries of muttered prayers could not, in much the same way that Talos sponsored Velsharoon's recent ascension. That ascension had a price tag, though. In her guise as the Undying Queen, Tia-

mat appeared to the spiritual remains of what was Sammaster and offered him divinity and an opportunity to gain revenge on all those who had wronged him if he would bow to her, the Undying Queen of all dracoliches. With few options open to him, Sammaster accepted. Now flush with power he has not known since Mystra's touch and his Chosen powers were stripped from him, St. Sammaster, Harbinger of the Undying Queen, works to unite all cells of the Cult of the Dragon under him. Once this is achieved, St. Sammaster has sworn to reveal "his" master plan that, by working "with" the Undying Queen, the world he foresaw will be made real by his followers and those of Tiamat.

This ascension and alliance could have far-reaching effects for much of Faerûn, and PCs can be brought into the story at many points. The obvious choice is to involve the PCs in the eruption of Cult activity after Sammaster proclaims his ascension. If the PCs are near a Cult cell, they may be asked by the populace or authorities (or even the Harpers if the PCs have ties to that organization) to try and stop the destruction.

If either the church of Tiamat or the Cult of the Dragon is a current antagonist for the PCs, the characters may learn of the plan (and the underlying scheme if they are particularly lucky or inventive) at any suitably dramatic point. Do the PCs reveal this plan of Tiamat's and bring down the wrath of her church hierarchy as well as that of those loyal to Sammaster's vision as they are condemned as heretics whose sedition must be squelched permanently?

The characters might even be approached by a high-ranking Cult member who does not buy Sammaster's bogus apotheosis story. He suspects other forces are at work, but he cannot investigate himself without risking exposure as an unbeliever or a heretic. The Cultist's motives may be (relatively) benign; he simply could sense that there is more to the story. Or, he might be looking for a means to hold onto his own power in the Cult, since he is now faced with the divine return of the Cult's founder and his corresponding loss of importance. In either case, he seeks out the PCs for their aid—without revealing his true identity (unless the PCs know of him from prior adventures).

The Harp and the Claw

If the PCs are involved with the Harpers, that organization could start the PCs onto any of the adventures outlined here. One specifically Harper-oriented adventure is not without merit, however.

Those Who Harp have lost contact with one of their infiltrators in the Sembian Cult cell, a half-elven fighter/mage/thief known as Maenoth (his real name, not the magically reinforced false identity he is using now). Maenoth had attached himself to the service of the cell's master thief Zilvreen as a fighter/thief and one of his chief aides.

Maenoth possesses an intelligent magical long sword the half-elf calls "Hawk." When a company of adventurers making camp along the Way of the Manticore stumble across the blade, Hawk quickly recruits them to help rescue Maenoth. Unbeknownst to the Harper, Zilvreen suspected Maenoth's true allegiance, and on the master thief's secret orders, the other members of the Cult caravan he was accompanying turned on the half-elf while he slept just after the group



crossed the Darkflow River, which empties the Vast Swamp. In the struggle to subdue the scrappy half-elf, the Harper's sword was lost, and the arrival of a passing Cormyrean patrol soon after prevented the Cultists from searching for the blade.

Hawk and the adventurers head south in pursuit of Maenoth and his captors, who broke away from the main caravan, which continued on to Wheloon two days earlier. The trail leads to the hamlet of Battlerise, named for the ruins of Battlegate Castle that crown a small hill to the west of the Darkflow River, just south of the Way of the Manticore. Once the seat of the extinct Auantiver noble family, the catacombs beneath the supposedly haunted keep serve as a Cult base for operations into eastern Cormyr and the Vast Swamp. Any effort to rescue Maenoth must take place quickly, or he is likely to die at the hands of his torturers. Rescue efforts are complicated by the presence of a Cult agent among the hired hands working for the horse-trading Margar family who alerts the Cultists beneath Battlegate to the incipient threat.

Between Two Evils

This nugget is best utilized while the PCs are traveling somewhere that at least one member of the Zhentarim and the Cult of the Dragon are known to frequent. (The Dalelands and Sembia are strong contenders, though not the only ones.)

The PCs come across a scene of battle during their travels (perhaps even in the course of another, unrelated adventure). Their first impression is that a band of raiders is attacking a heavily defended merchant caravan. Further observation reveals that both sides have potent magical items and/or powers (from the PCs' point of view), and that the attackers seem to be using minor undead as foot soldiers.

What is really happening is that the raiders belong to the Cult of the Dragon and the merchants are Zhentilar and members of the Zhentarim. A feud has existed between these two organizations that began when Sammaster used Shargrailar to extort money and magic from the Zhents. The caravan's cargo can be valuable mundane items such as gems or coins, magical potions, spell components, even more formidable magical items, or even slaves or magical creatures and monsters. The Cult raiders may know what they are fighting to obtain, but depriving the Zhentarim of it—and killing some Zhents along the way—is the Cultists' primary motive for attack. This fight could even be related to the Zhentarim-Cult struggle for control of the trade routes and oases across the great sand sea of Anauroch.

The PCs can fairly easily identify both factions if they take the time to check. They must then decide who, if anyone, to assist. If they simply charge in to defend the "merchants," however, they will likely earn the local Cult cell's long-lasting enmity and, perhaps, the gratitude of the Zhents—giving the PCs the advantage of being owed a favor by the Zhents that they may be able to call in later.

A Mysterious Patron

One of the ingredients needed to create the potion that transforms a living dragon into a dracolich is vampire's blood. If the Cult cannot create (and then sacrifice) a vampire of its own, it must find one and take its blood for the potion. The Cult needs a potion now because a dragon associated with it

has finally agreed to undergo the conversion process. The Cult has found a vampire it tried to use, but it escaped the Cult members' first attempts to kill it.

One night the PCs are approached by a (charmed) person they trust and are asked to help a friend who is in need of heroic assistance. The vampire (who is, of course, the friend in need) does its best to disguise its true nature from the PCs when it meets them. The "friend" concocts some story about a band of assassins sent by an heir who wants his inheritance (or gives another somewhat plausible but slightly odd story). If the PCs take the assignment (and they should), they encounter the Cult vampire-hunters. Stand back and watch the sparks fly as the PCs try to figure out who lied to whom and just what the heck is going on!

An alternative is that the Cult found its undead quarry but failed to get its blood at the cost of several Cult members. The Cult members, in their normal identities, subtly put the word out that there is a vampire in the area and some brave heroes are needed to destroy the unliving fiend. If the PCs take the bait and are successful, armed Cult members show up to gather the blood before the PCs can permanently destroy the vampire's material form.

Work for Hire

As with "A Mysterious Patron" above, the PCs are approached by an anonymous benefactor who either provides them with information regarding a heroic adventure or hires them outright to undertake one. In all of the examples below, the true identity of the characters' employer is a member of the Cult of the Dragon who has hired the PCs to obtain an objective the Cult cannot without risk of exposure or that the Cult considers too dangerous to attempt to achieve with local Cultists. In order for all these scenarios to work to their best effect, the PCs must not know (at least initially) that the Cult is behind the adventure they are undertaking. At some point, though, DMs owe it to themselves to see the anguished and enraged looks on the faces of their players when they realize their PCs have been pawns of the Cult of the Dragon.

Some possible "heroic tasks" that the PCs may be invited to participate in include:

- The Cultist (possibly through several levels of intermediaries) has discovered the map to an ancient ruin, castle, or dungeon. He offers the map to the PCs in exchange for only the first choice of treasures magical and mundane. In truth, the Cult wants something that it believes rests within the ruins and decides to risk only the lives of its dupes (the PCs) in an attempt to gain the item.
- The patron hires the PCs to free his "unjustly imprisoned brother" or some other relative from a nearby community's authorities. The "brother" or other relation imprisoned by the community is a Cultist who was caught in the midst of some illegal act. His crime, of course, is either real (what he did) or is merely the trumped-up charge of the unfair authorities in the area. Characters who already have some reason to dislike those very same authorities are especially susceptible to this ploy. Of course, this gambit only works if the PCs



are less-than-lawful or mercenary enough not to care too much about the innocence of the party in question as long as they are well paid for their efforts. A variant on this scenario is that the PCs are hired to “recover” an item “stolen” or otherwise unjustly appropriated by some third party—perhaps even by those authorities.

- The patron, knowing of the PCs’ heroic reputations, points out that an evil dragon (age appropriate to the campaign) has been discovered lairing nearby. It is surely the heroes’ duty to go out and destroy this threat to the safety of the region. The Cult’s true motive for this setup is one of two: either the dragon is hungry or it has violently refused to associate with the Cult.

In the first instance, the Cult-affiliated dragon wants to dine on human (elf, dwarf, etc.) flesh without sending the entire region into a panic by raiding a village or something equally provocative. After all, that might attract more heroes, and that is just what the Cult does not want. By sending the PCs after the dragon, the Cult satisfies the dragon’s appetite without causing an uproar. In addition it gets rid of a group of potentially troublesome heroes. When the heroes arrive at the lair, it is laced with traps, and the dragon is more than prepared for their arrival—and perhaps even has some invisible Cultists at hand to cut off the PCs’ escape.

In the second instance, the Cult has approached the dragon concerning a permanent affiliation with the Cult. The dragon, deeply offended at the prospect of undeath (or simply working with mammals), refuses the offer—violently. The Cult lacks the means or the inclination to continue its discussions with the dragon and so it alerts the PCs to the dragon’s presence. (One option for the dragon that refused the Cult’s offer is, of course, to contact the PCs and alert them to the Cult’s presence, thus giving the local Cult cell’s leaders a topic other than revenge against the dragon to worry about.)

If the dragon defeats the PCs, the Cult has lost nothing, but it has shown the dragon what its future may hold—party after party of adventurers sent to attack it—if it continues to decline participation in Cult activities. If the characters kill the dragon, the Cult members can then attack and kill the weakened PCs, claim the dragon’s death as their own kill, collect its hoard, and use the incident as an example of the power of the Cult and its means of “controlling” the uncooperative when dealing with evil dragons who may be reluctant to work alongside the human Cultists. The Cult also may arrive “just in time” to rescue the dragon from the PCs and offer to heal the dragon after the battle is concluded, thus showing its loyalty and devotion to dragonkind. (Of course, the dragon’s rescuers should not include the NPC who contacted the PCs to tackle this mission.)

A Dragon in the Nursery

One of the little-known practices of the Cult of the Dragon is caring for and guarding any eggs or hatchlings that Cult dragons may have. In order to best protect their eggs and offspring from the Cult’s enemies, all the progeny of a Cult cell’s dragons are secretly moved to an isolated location

where Cultists and mages care for, raise, and educate the young evil dragons.

Such duty is not for all Cult members. First of all, the dragon parents (even evil dragons) do not blithely hand over their children into the care of just any Cult member. Only the most trusted and most powerful Cultists are granted the honor (and within the Cult, it is considered such) of caring for the young dragons.

The PCs can become involved with this draconic nursery in a number of ways:

- In the course of their adventures in a Cult-infested area, the PCs simply stumble across the nursery in an isolated portion of a dungeon, cavern, or ruins complex. The PCs open a secret door or three and find themselves surrounded by a bunch of large (watermelon-sized or larger) eggs, at least one of which is hatching as they enter. (Think of the egg-room scene aboard the alien spacecraft from the film *Alien*.) The room is hot and humid, and the Cult guardian—and a few brave dragon hatchlings—are within range to rescue the unborn dragons. Of course, the PCs should not be able to identify the eggs as those of dragons immediately, nor can they discern good dragon eggs from evil dragon eggs. (Also note that very young dragons’ coloration can be confusing; see the MONSTROUS MANUAL tome for details.)
- The Cult has stolen the eggs from a female dragon in an attempt to blackmail the powerful creature into becoming a dracolich. The Cult has told the female dragon that refusal, any attempt to rescue her offspring, or even leaving her lair is grounds for destruction of the eggs. Thus hamstrung, the enraged creature uses its contacts or magical abilities to anonymously ask the PCs to rescue her kidnapped children from their kidnappers.

A variant on this idea is that the Cult cell, desperate for any sort of draconic might, has kidnapped the eggs or hatchlings of a good dragon. Fearful for the life of her offspring, the dragon may reluctantly go to work for the Cult. The PCs become involved when they hear of a good dragon engaging in raiding, looting, cooperating with Cult members in illegal activities, and taking other atypical actions—or when the dragon pleads with them to save her babies. Meanwhile, the Cult is charming or otherwise brainwashing any hatchlings toward cooperating with the Cult and engaging in future evil activities.

If the PCs are not observant, they may not realize the true motive for the dragon’s blackmail-induced actions. If they blindly attack the good-hearted dragon, if their reckless actions endanger the dragon’s offspring, or if, most horribly, they cause the offsprings’ deaths, the characters will have made an incredibly powerful, long-lived, and influential enemy who hates them with a righteous, seething rage that goes beyond reason.

A Lost Potion

The PCs discover a body lying on the side of the road in their travels. On the body are 50 gp, normal equipment for a mercenary (choose the class and race), and a large black potion bottle sealed with a lead stopper. The potion bottle



contains a dracolich potion that was created by an alchemist for the Cult of the Dragon. The dead mercenary was delivering the finished potion to the Cultists, who are still waiting for the potion.

It started a little over a year ago, when a group of young Cultists began to attempt to recruit the green dragon Ralionate to join the Cult's elite and become a bone dragon. The Cultists are led by the zealous, if inexperienced, mage Alachor. For the last year, Ralionate has resisted and continually strung the Cult along, wringing jewels, magic, and gold from the Cult.

Recently, Ralionate attacked a high-level group of adventurers. After the fight, several adventurers were dead, and Ralionate was severely wounded. When Ralionate made it back to her lair, the Cultists had no magic strong enough to save the mortally wounded dragon. Despairing, Alachor forged his father's name and sent a message to the Cult's alchemist asking for a dracolich potion. (Alachor's father is a wizard or fighter of some experience and high standing in his Cult cell.) The alchemist created the potion and hired a mercenary to take the potion to Alachor. Along the way, the mercenary was bitten by a poisonous snake and died.

Now Alachor and his neophyte Cultists are becoming increasingly anxious, and Ralionate is slowly dying. Soon the Cultists must do *something*. . . .

If the adventurers look around for someone to identify the potion, they find that any wizard over 8th level can identify the potion as a dracolich potion. However, if the alchemist is alerted to the party's investigations, he alerts the Cult and the Cultists, who come looking for the potion.

This adventure is best suited for low-level adventurers. The neophyte Cultists can be as low in level as necessary, the dragon Ralionate can be severely wounded and unable to defend herself, and the Cultists may not have their elders around to support them and bail them out of any trouble that occurs.

Of course, if something happens to the young Cultists, then the older Cultists who are fathers and mothers to the neophytes are bound to come looking for their children. Then the party is in trouble—but that should be at least a couple of levels away for the PCs.

The Oasis of Handless Men

Player characters reaching an oasis (guided by hastening vultures, perhaps) discover it strewn with the bodies of 20 recently slain Bedine warriors—a war party of some sort. Some of these bodies hang from trees, some lie huddled half-buried in the sands, some have been torn apart by jackals and reduced to gnawed bones, and desert snakes slither through the eye sockets of the picked-clean skulls of others.

There are no camels, weapons, food, coins, or waterskins to be found anywhere in the oasis. There has also been a more grisly theft than of equipment: Every corpse has had both its hands cut off, and none of them remain anywhere about the area.

PCs who search come upon a trail (or see a glowing light over the dunes by night, which can lead them in the

same direction) and eventually reach an old stone tower, hidden among tall dunes. The tower is half-buried in sand, and observant PCs notice that it has tiny slit-windows in its upper regions. Out of these windows come intermittent puffs of sand, as if someone were repeatedly throwing out handfuls of sand.

This is exactly what *is* happening. Inside the tower is an adventuring party of agents of the Cult of the Dragon who are led by a wizard who is trying to find a lost ancient magical item he believes (from reading an old wizard's diary) to be here. He is searching for a rod that can "heal" or regenerate undead beings and can therefore be used to knit broken dracolich bones or even replace bones that have been destroyed or gone missing. The sand puffs are due to his underlings' and his efforts to dig out accumulated sand so as to see the tower's contents (if any). The strength of the wizard, Elphraun, and those who accompany him—and even the presence of the coveted rod—are matters left to the DM to determine.

The Cult party has all of the captured food, water, and camels of the 20 Bedine. The camels are recognizable to other Bedine, and PCs using them later may be attacked merely for possessing them on the mistaken belief that the PCs are the ones who slew the handless men.

Elphraun seized the hands so that he could create crawling claws to dig sand out of the buried tower. The Bedine yielded 40 claws, and he can direct these to attack intruding PCs. (Crawling claws are described in the MONSTROUS MANUAL tome and the FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting box.)

War Within the Cult

The PCs stumble into a war between members of different Cult cells. Velvet, a black dragon of young age, is attempting to move into the territory of Malachite, a green dragon approaching wurm age. Velvet has a group of powerful cultists working for him, and while they are not particularly high level, they are very organized and close-knit. Malachite also has a group of cultists working for her—a larger group than Velvet has. But Malachite's cultists are chaotic and unfriendly, vying among themselves for attention, power, and wealth. The player characters must move carefully or they are overwhelmed by Cult plots on all sides; however, if they quickly figure out that two cells are at war, they may be able to use the two cells' mutual hatred to work against them and eventually eliminate both groups.

Save the Dragon

Shard, a blue dragon of old age, was recently attacked by a party of high-level adventurers who managed to slip through her Cult organization's information net. Shard managed to kill the adventurers, but at a high price; she is dying. Shard's Cult followers, to atone for their ineptitude, are gathering the ingredients needed for Shard to become a dracolich. The PCs knew the dead adventurers and become involved. They can try to stop the Cultists, can try to finish the job on Shard, or happen to have an ingredient that the Cultists need for the potion or a magical gem suitable for becoming Shard's host.



Five years now have I reigned supreme over my former brethren, my living, breathing subjects, the blue dragons of the Great Blight called Anauroch. After I destroyed that coward and pretender Sussethilaris, a few of my vassals bucked under my – unorthodox – leadership style. These close-minded fools paid with their paltry lives. All but one that is. A youngish female, Derianthraxa, who with her mate dared to battle me, watched her pathetic male die before her eyes. Death was soon to claim her as well, but in a moment of clarity, she pleaded to be saved, to be made whole again, to be made like unto me, her slayer and her would-be savior.

I summoned Namirra to me and told him of my wishes. He agreed, but reserved the right to ask a favor of me in return, I had performed several “favors” for Namirra and his Cult over the past few years, and I suspected nothing out of the ordinary. Indeed, this Cult of Namirra’s had left me unbothered by their petty requests for almost two of the humans’ years. Since my actions of that time squelched the last uprising of the members of that petty keep near to Namirra’s home, Namirra had appeared only to fulfill my needs of the moment and to deposit minor contributions to my now vast hoard. Whatever feud the Cult may have had with this keep, it is beyond even my prodigious intellect to determine why the Cult does not simply eliminate its enemies as I have done with mine, including those keep-ists who thought they could enforce their pact with the former Suzerain of Anauroch. They learned that their alliance with Sussethilaris was as dead as he (and they).

Namirra vanished and soon enough returned from his home in the human nation of Sembia with a potion that would transform Derianthraxa into a creature almost as powerful as myself. Derianthraxa proved her mettle by surviving the arduous process. After a time, she took her place at my side as Queen of Anauroch.

I resolved to take the next few years and instruct Derianthraxa about her new form and its abilities, as well as the honor she was granted to share my lair and my kingdom. However, no sooner had I begun the process than I was distracted from this most important task by Namirra. He appeared without my summoning him, he even dared to enter my presence without announcing himself first. Then, after these affronts to my power and eternal glory, he had the incredible audacity to – tell – me to act in defense of his Cult.

I could brook no more. I rose to my full, terrible height and prepared to punish this insignificant mammal for his insults both to me and my new queen.

Namirra touched an amulet about his neck and muttered.

Suddenly, I was calm. I lowered myself into a resting position and bid Derianthraxa to take her place beside me while we listened closely to our friend Namirra’s request. Our friend Namirra then explained that those keep-ists had attacked his home and base in Sembia and that my aid—our aid—was sorely needed in a counterattack. Given directions and instructions by our friend Namirra, my queen and I flew forth to cover the vast distance to a place known as the Citadel of the Raven, there to wreak havoc and teach the keep-ists the awful price for their arrogance. We left immediately. *****

Only now have I returned from the disastrous attack upon the Citadel—and only now have I also returned to my true self. My queen, Derianthraxa, fell before the spells of the cursed place’s wizards; one wearing a mask to hide his cowardly mammal face struck her death blow, I am sure of it. If I meet him again, that masked mage will join her in final death—this I swear a horrible oath to achieve. But I could not act on my desired revenge then, when she died! Instead, I heard my friend Namirra’s voice telling me to return to my mountainous home, and leave I did. Rage fills me now at the thought of his arrogance, the deceitful means he must have used to control me, but I cannot act upon it!

What power did Namirra hold over me? A mere mammal possessing dominion over a dragon – surely the universe will not withstand such a crime! Why did we fly forth at his bidding? Why could I not attack the masked mage? It must have been that amulet he grasped as I rose to attack. If I can surprise him and remove that necklace—along with his head . . .

Unless – dear Lord Zorquan – my present form, the form given me by Namirra, by him and his accursed Cult, my very form and existence is what gives him power over me. Lord Asgorath, what have I done to myself?!

–From the magical Libram of recording of Malvgris, very old Cult blue dracolich of southern Anauroch, circa 1370 DR



Appendix 1: Dragon Deities

The draconic pantheon is a confused one, especially to nondragons. Beyond what *The Draconicon* has to say on the matter of dragons and the powers they worship, a draconic pantheon is discussed in *Monster Mythology*. These two differ in many ways. The following list summarizes and reconciles these two for the purposes of the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting. Following the general list is a complete description of the draconic deity Null. This deity description follows the format established in *Faiths & Avatars*. See that work for definitions of the heading categories and special notes pertaining to the abilities detailed in the bulleted points in the specialty priest information.

Dragon Deities

Asgorath

(World-Shaper)

Asgorath is a greater power of the Outer Planes. He is said to encompass all alignments in his being, but he is often regarded as neutral. His portfolio is creation, and his symbol is an unadorned circle, representing totality. In the Outer Planes, he is more commonly known as Io, and the location of his domain is unknown.

Astilabor

(Acquisitor, Hoardmistress)

Astilabor is a chaotic neutral intermediate power of Limbo. Her portfolio is acquisitiveness, specifically the desire to acquire and hold wealth and by doing so gain status. Her symbol is a 12-faceted gem.

Bahamut

(The King of all Good Dragons, the Platinum Dragon, Lord of the North Wind, Justicemaker)

Bahamut is a lawful good lesser power of Mount Celestia. His portfolio is good dragons, metallic dragons, wisdom, and enlightened justice (justice tempered with mercy and punishment with forgiveness), and his symbols are the polar star above a milky nebula or a reptilian eye superimposed over a square of gold. His domain, Bahamut's Palace, is located in Mercuria. In some traditions, he is said to be the son of Tamara and Lendys, and in others, he, Tiamat, and Null (or Faluzure) are all said to be children of Asgorath (Io). In the Realms, he is often known as Xymor.

Garyx

(Firelord, All-Destroyer, Cleanser of Worlds)

Garyx is a chaotic evil intermediate power of the Abyss. His portfolio is fire-using dragons and destruction by flame, and his symbol is a reptilian eye superimposed over a red flame.

Hlal

(The Jester, the Pursued)

Hlal is a chaotic good lesser power of Arborea and Ysgard. Her portfolio is draconic humor, inventiveness, and pleasure, and her symbol is a single white flame, representing

the light of wit. In the Outer Planes, she is more commonly known as Aasterinian and is often regarded as chaotic neutral in alignment. Her domain in Arborea is unknown, but in Ysgard her domain, Brassberg, is in Nidavellir.

Kalzareinad (Dead)

(Keeper of Dark Wonders)

Kalzareinad was a neutral evil demipower of the Gray Waste. His portfolio was dragon magic, specifically the uncaring, evil, or selfish application of dragon magic. His symbol was a five-pointed star encircled by a dragon grabbing its own tail in its mouth. His worship and portfolio were entirely subsumed by Kereska during the Time of Troubles (1358 DR), and he passed quietly into deific death shortly thereafter in the Astral Plane.

Kereska

(Wonderbringer, Light of Magic)

Kereska is a chaotic neutral intermediate power of Limbo. Her portfolio is magic, specifically dragon magic, and magical creativity. Her symbol is a five-pointed star with the lower two points extended.

Lendys

(World-Shaper)

Lendys is a lawful neutral intermediate power of Nirvana. His portfolio is balance and justice, and his symbol is a sword balanced on a needle's point. He is the consort of Tamara.

Null

(Death Wyrn, Guardian of the Lost, Night Dragon, Reaver)

Null is worshiped as a two-aspected dragon deity in the Torilian crystal sphere. Here he is regarded as both a lawful evil lesser power of Carceri and a lawful neutral intermediate power of the Outlands. His portfolio is death and the dead. In his evil aspect, he is Reaver, and his portfolio is the taking of life, decay, the undead, energy draining, and necromancy. In his neutral aspect, he is known as the Guardian of the Lost, and is the guardian of the dead and the shepherd of dragon spirits to the afterlife. In this aspect, his portfolio is the dead, exhaustion, final judgment, and fatalism. His symbols are a circle divided diagonally into white and black semicircles (the Guardian of the Lost) or a draconic skull (Reaver). In the Outer Planes it is commonly known that Null is, in fact, two different deities known as Faluzure (the Reaver aspect, who regarded as neutral evil), whose domain is the Mausoleum of Pain in Minethys, and Chronopsis (the Guardian of the Lost aspect, who is regarded as neutral), whose domain is the Mausoleum of Chronopsis in the Outlands.

Tamara

(Her Beneficence, Her Mercy)

Tamara is a neutral good intermediate power of Elysium. Her portfolio is life, light, mercy, and forgiveness, and her symbol is a seven-pointed star on a field of black. She is the consort of Lendys.



Task

(The Taker and Holder, Wrester)

Task is a chaotic evil lesser power of Pandemonium. His portfolio is greed and selfishness, and his symbol is a pile of five coins.

Tiamat

(The Dragon Queen, the Chromatic Dragon, Nemesis of the Gods, the Dark Lady, Queen of Chaos, the Undying Queen, Bane of Bahamut, the Avaricious)

Tiamat is a lawful evil lesser power of Baator. Her portfolio includes evil dragons, chromatic dragons, evil reptiles, greed, and the Faerûnian nation of Chessenta. Her symbol is a five-headed dragon. Her domain, Tiamat's Lair, is located in Avernus. In some traditions, she, Bahamut (Xymor), and Null (or Faluzure) are all said to be children of Asgorath (Io). In the Realms, she is known as Tchazzar in the nation of Chessenta.

Zorquan

(High One, Greatest Wyrn)

Zorquan is a neutral intermediate power of the Outlands. His portfolio is dragonkind and dragonness (the essence of that which is dragons), and his symbol is a black circle superimposed on a larger concentric white circle.

Null

(Death Wyrn, Guardian of the lost, Night Dragon, Reaver)

Intermediate/Lesser Power of the Outlands/Carceri, LN/LE

PORTFOLIO:	Death, the dead, decay, exhaustion, energy draining, fatalism, judgment, necromancy, undeath
ALIASES:	Faluzure, Chronepsis
DOMAIN NAME:	Outlands/Mausoleum of Chronepsis and Minethys/Mausoleum of Pain
SUPERIOR:	Asgorath
ALLIES:	Kalzareinad (dead)
FOES:	Bahamut (Xymor), Hlal, Tamara, Tiamat
SYMBOL:	A circle divided diagonally into white and black semicircles or a draconic skull
WOR. ALIGN.:	Any (Guardian of the Lost) or LE, NE, CE (Reaver)

Null (NUL) is the draconic god of death in all its myriad aspects. He is venerated by dragons of all alignments to some degree in his role as Guardian of the Lost. Many dragons of evil alignment—particularly shadow dragons and dracoliches—venerate Null in his aspect as Reaver, the Death Wyrn. Null is also known in some obscure texts as Chronepsis or Faluzure, but those aliases may simply be the names of draconic deities of other worlds or his names in other crystal spheres.

As with most draconic deities of Faerûn, Null's faith has been slowly dwindling for centuries, and, as of the Fall of

the Gods, he had but a handful of devoted adherents (some of whom were undead). Since the Time of Troubles, Null has begun to make inroads among the Sacred Ones of the Cult of the Dragon. Null's motivation is in part due to a desire to staunch his gradual loss of power and in part to counter Tiamat's recent attempts to incorporate the Followers of the Scaly Way into her own faith. A few ill-regarded members of Sembian Cult cell have begun to whisper that Null is "the Dead Dragon who shall rule the world entire" with the Sacred Ones as his worldly vassals, but it is unknown if Null has made any such claim himself.

Null is said to speak with the dusty croak of the undead. He is arrogant, fatalistic, proud, and totally lacking in any sense of humor. The Night Dragon does not anger easily, but instead slowly nurtures grudges that eventually blossom into undying hatreds for slights and attacks (imagined or otherwise). Null's residences, both mausoleums, are said to coexist in part on the Negative Material Plane and the Demiplane of Shadows; in fact, the two death houses may in reality be one structure that exists both in the Outlands and Carceri.

Null has a long-standing hatred of both Tiamat and Bahamut, who are said to be his siblings. While Null and Tiamat were once allied, some rift in the prehistory of the Realms has driven them into everlasting enmity. Null nurtures a deep grudge against Hlal as a result of an elaborate practical joke that robbed the Death Wyrn of his dignity centuries ago. While the Night Dragon has little patience for most of the other surviving draconic gods, he bitterly resents Tamara's attempts to interfere with the inevitability of death and darkness and hates her with a special passion. The one deity Null was on somewhat friendly terms with was Kalzareinad, a demipower of draconic magic who was said to have aided Sammaster's creation of the first dracolich, and the loss of this ally has led scholars to speculate that he may soon seek others to replace him.

Null's Avatar

(Great Wyrn Shadow Dragon Dracolich, Necromancer 30, Shadow Mage 30, Cleric 28)

Null appears as a region of impenetrable blackness in the shape of a huge dragon. He is surrounded by an aura of numbing cold, and it is said that to touch Null is instant death and to hear his voice is to suffer the agonizing aging caused by the sight of a ghost. Null draws his spells from all schools and from the spheres of all, astral, charm, combat, creation (reversed only), divination, elemental, guardian, healing, law, necromantic, numbers, protection, summoning, sun (darkness-creating only), thought, time, travelers, war, and wards.

AC -12; MV 21, Fl 33 (C), Jp 6; HP 216; THAC0 1; #AT 3+special
Dmg 2d6+12/2d6+12/6d6+12 (claw/claw/bite)
MR 70%; SZ G (80-foot body, 64-foot tail)
Str 20, Dex 19, Con 21, Int 24, Wis 23, Cha 18
Spells P: 13/12/12/12/11/10/6, W: 9/9/9/9/9/9/8/8 *
Saves PPDM 2, RSW 3, PP 5, BW 7, Sp 4

*Numbers assume one extra necromancy spell and one extra shadow magic spell per spell level.



Special Att/Def: Null has all the special attacks, defenses, and abilities of a great wyrm shadow dragon and of a dracolich. He can employ the breath weapon of any non-good dragon (chromatic, gem, fang, etc.) or *breath of putrescence* in lieu of his normal cloud of blackness. Instead of one of his physical attacks or a magical one, Null can *energy drain* any creature within 100 feet of his physical form. Null can cast *finger of death* once per round in lieu of a claw attack. Null is immune to all spells from the school of shadow magic, illusion/phantasm, and necromancy.

Other Manifestations

Null commonly manifests as the shadow of a monstrous dragon of indeterminate race or as the chilling touch of the undead (inflicting 2d8 points of chilling damage and forcing a saving throw vs. paralyzation on any living being successfully touched or it is paralyzed for 2d6 rounds).

Null acts or shows his favor through the appearance or presence of ravens, shadows, vultures, and black sapphires. His most common draconic emissaries are abishai (baatezu), shadow dragons, and dracoliches.

The Church

CLERGY:	Priest dragons and dracoliches, specialty priests
CLERGY'S ALIGN.:	LN, N, LE, NE, CE
TURN UNDEAD:	PD: No, SP: No
CMND. UNDEAD:	PD: No, SP: Yes

All dragons and dracoliches capable of casting priest spells who venerate Null as well as all specialty priests of the Night Dragon receive religion (draconian) as a bonus non-weapon proficiency.

Null is worshiped in two seemingly contradictory aspects. As Guardian of the Lost, Null is the guardian of the dead. As such, he shepherds the spirits of dragons to their respective planes when they die, and he ensures they are no longer troubled by enemies they may have had while alive. In this aspect, individual dragons who have just lost someone close to them sometimes make offerings to Null to speed the recently departed's spirit to its final resting place. As Reaver, Null enjoys the taking of life, and he blesses others who serve him in this capacity. Reaver supports research into necromancy and those who seek to extend their lives through undeath. It is said that with the Death Wyrms' blessing, the first dragons transformed themselves into shadow dragons, and some claim that it was Reaver who whispered the secrets of creating dracoliches to Sammaster. (Other claim it was Kalzareinad, or that Reaver was gifted with the secrets upon Kalzareinad's passing.)

Temples of Null are typically dimly illuminated subterranean cavernous vaults cloaked in endlessly shifting shadows. Many dragons of all species and alignments travel to such temples shortly before their deaths, and their shattered skeletons typically engulf any given temple's floor. Interspersed among the piled bones are uncounted coins and gems that once adorned the scales of the departed wyrms. Spirits of the dead wyrms and other spectral

guardians defend Null's temples from interlopers who seek to plunder such rich draconic burial pits.

Like all remaining draconic deities of Faerûn, Null has not had an organized priesthood among his draconic followers since the dragon holy wars millennia ago. (Null's archrival, Tiamat, has an organized priesthood among her human followers, but not among her draconic followers.) Dragons and dracoliches who venerate Null and who are capable of casting priest spells are considered members of Null's clergy, and they receive the initial knowledge of their priest spells from the Night Dragon. Those few dragons and dracoliches who truly serve the Night Dragon as priests are known as annihilists and are considered to be draconic specialty priests.

Dogma: As the Guardian of the Lost, Null teaches that all things shall eventually come to rest, and, when they do, their spirits pass on into the afterlife. All life eventually leads into death, which is simply a demarcation point marking the change to another existence. True death is final and absolute, and once dragons pass on, the concerns of the physical world must never again disturb them so that they are able to pursue existence in their new form to the fullest.

As Reaver, Null teaches that death and decay are inevitable and omnipresent. Dragons are gifted with the strength to withstand death for so long so that they may serve as emissaries of Reaver in spreading death among the lesser races. To truly become strong, dragons should incorporate aspects of death into their lives. Whether they chose to draw on the energies of the Demiplane of Shadow or the Negative Material Plane, dragons who embrace death in life herald the day when the afterlife will incorporate the living world as well.

Day-to-Day Activities: Null's clergy occupy their days as do most dragons: endless hours of sleep, avaricious contemplation of their hoards, and plotting of future glories interspersed with brief hunting and mating forays and the occasional battle with interlopers in their lairs. Unlike other wyrms, however, Null's followers are typically preoccupied with necromantic investigations and the philosophical contemplation of death.

Holy Days/Important Ceremonies: As a result of the millennia-long decline of draconic faiths coupled with the extended lifetimes of dragons, few draconic holy ceremonies have survived to the present day, and those that do occur only a handful of times per century. Nevertheless, at least two such ceremonies continue to be celebrated by those who venerate Null.

A ceremony known as the Drawing Down is held at most once every lunar month beginning on the night of the waning half-moon. Over the next fortnight, dragons of all species consign the spirits of the recently deceased to the Guardian of the Lost in elaborate ceremonies of corporeal internment that culminate with the appearance of the new moon.

Total solar eclipses mark Reaver's infrequent holy day, known as the Nullification. On such occasions, followers of Reaver rampage throughout the Realms, wreaking destruction and leaving naught but death in their wake. It is said



that the follower of Null who inflicts the greatest number of casualties on the mammalian races is transformed into the Wyrms of Death (an unique undead form similar to that of a dracolich) and reigns as high priest of Null's faith until the next such eclipse.

Major Centers of Worship: Two Nullist centers of worship of significance are the Well of Dragons and the Crypt of Dragons.

The Well of Dragons is a vast natural cauldron located due east of the Skull Gorge that is concealed by illusory terrain except when bathed in moonlight. Countless dragons have gone to this ancient temple of Null to die over the centuries, some choosing to shatter themselves against the rocks in a fatal dive and others choosing simply to peacefully wait for their imminent denouement. The Dire Dragon, an unusually large undead shadow dragon (although not a true dracolich) who lairs in the Well of Dragons, is said by some to be the current Wyrms of Death and to have been transformed into his present undead state by Reaver himself. Others claim this is simply halfling lies, but whatever the truth, the Dire Dragon has amassed an incredible hoard, even for a wyrm of his age and power. The Dire Dragon is certainly capable of defending himself thanks to his mighty shadow magic, the numerous magical baubles he has gathered from the corpses of dragons who have perished in the Well, and the secrets and stratagems revealed to him by those dragons who prefer to talk away their last few hours.

The Crypt of Dragons is a vast underground cavern-tomb within a day's travel of the town of Hilp in Cormyr. (Although the exact location has been forgotten, the subterranean vault is believed to be located either northwest of the town in the Ring's Forest or due east of the crossroads community under the rolling hills of the high farm country.) This shrine was consecrated ages ago to the Guardian of the Lost (and is believed to be the largest remaining temple dedicated solely to that nonevil aspect of the god), but it has been centuries since the last dragon was interred therein. Orncibl Rhommd, a weaver of Hilp, and his two apprentices stumbled across the ancient temple in the Year of the Worm (1356 DR), and Orncibl later described it as containing several mummified dragon corpses carefully arranged atop piles of gold and gems. Both of Orncibl's apprentices were felled by fields of blue crackling force that slew them when they approached too closely. Orncibl himself disappeared shortly after his astounding announcement, and agents of the Cult of the Dragon have been actively searching the region for the long-lost Crypt ever since.

Affiliated Orders: None.

Priestly Vestments: Null's holy symbol is a black sapphire with a hollow core into which a small white diamond is magically placed. Such holy symbols are known as "death rattles" after they sound they make when shaken.

Adventuring Garb: None.

Specialty Priests (Annihilists)

REQUIREMENTS:	Age category capable of casting priest spells, Intelligence 12, Wisdom 11
PRIME REQ.:	Intelligence, Wisdom
ALIGNMENT:	LN, LE, NE, CE
WEAPONS:	Any, but normally a dragon's natural weaponry
ARMOR:	Any, but normally a dragon's natural armor
MAJOR SPHERES:	All, astral, combat, divination, elemental, law, necromantic, protection, summoning, sun (darkness-creating only), time
MINOR SPHERES:	Charm, creation (reversed only), guardian, healing, numbers, thought, travelers, wards
MAGICAL ITEMS:	Same as dragons, clerics, and wizards
REQ. PROFS:	Reading/writing (Auld Wyrmish), reading/writing (common)
BONUS PROFS:	Spellcraft, survival (Demiplane of Shadow)

The age category at which a dragon first receives priest spells determines when it can become a specialty priest of a draconic power. This age category is called the first age category. Subsequent age categories are called second age category, third age category, etc. All granted powers are given in terms of the required relative age category of the draconic priest.

Shadow dragons, for example, typically can first cast priest spells when they are mature adults. A typical shadow dragon would reach the sixth age category upon attaining great wyrm status. Red dragons, on the other hand, can typically first cast priest spells when they are of venerable status. Thus a typical red dragon could never reach higher than the third age category, which it could achieve upon reaching great wyrm status. Note that in very rare cases, some dragons are capable of casting priest spells earlier than their brethren, and they can thus achieve much higher levels of proficiency as specialty priests.

- Annihilists must be shadow dragons or dracoliches.
- Annihilists are immune to all death magic spells and spell-like effects (such as *death spell*; *finger of death*; *power word, kill*; etc.).
- As with all draconic specialty priests, annihilists can cast double the normal number of priest spells granted to a normal dragon of their age and subspecies.
- Annihilists can cast *eneroation* or *shadow monsters* (as the 4th-level wizard spells) once per day at the first age category. At the third age category this rises to twice per day. At the fifth age category this rises to three times per day.
- Annihilists can cast *shadow magic* or *summon shadow* (as the 5th-level wizard spells) once per day at the second age category. At the fourth age category this rises to twice per day. At the sixth age category this rises to three times per day.



- Annihilists can cast *death spell* or *demishadow magic* (as the 6th-level wizard spells) once per day at the third age category. At the fifth age category this rises to twice per day.
- Annihilists can cast *shadow walk* (as the 7th-level wizard spell) or *shades* (as the 6th-level wizard spell) once per day at the fourth age category. At the sixth age category this rises to twice per day.
- Annihilists can cast *finger of death* (as the 7th-level wizard spell) or *shadow dragon* (as the 5th-level draconic wizard spell) once per day at the fifth age category.
- Annihilists can cast *energy drain* (as the 9th-level wizard spell) once per day at the sixth age category.

Nullist Spells

These spells are all dragon magic priest spells exclusive to the Nullist dragon clergy and specialty priests. Casting times and components given are both for dragon spells cast the normal dragon way and dragons with priest class levels casting priest spells (in parentheses).

1st Level

Eternal Sleep (Pr 1; Necromancy)

Sphere: Necromantic
Range: Touch
Components: V (V, M)
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 1 (1 round)
Area of Effect: One dragon corpse
Saving Throw: None

This spell ensures that a dead dragon's spirit is allowed to pass for all eternity to the Outer Planes. Once it is cast on the corpse of a dragon, that corpse can never be animated or raised, and the dragon itself cannot be contacted by means of spells such as *speak with dead*. *Eternal sleep* has no effect on corpses that have been animated at any time prior to the casting, nor does it have any effect on dracoliches or other undead creatures.

(When cast as a priest spell rather than a dragon spell, the material component for this spell is the priest's holy symbol.)

2nd Level

Ecdysis (Pr 2; Alteration)

Sphere: Animal, Time
Range: Touch
Components: V (V, S, M)
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 1(5)
Area of Effect: Touch
Saving Throw: Neg.

This insidious spell accelerates the gradual molting that dragons (like many reptiles) gradually undergo. *Ecdysis* is only effective against dracohydras, dragons, dragon turtles, dragonets, and the various draconic hybrids. It is ineffective against dracoliches and other undead forms of those species.

If the target of an *ecdysis* spell makes a saving throw vs. spell, then the *ecdysis* spell ends without effect. If the target fails its saving throw vs. spell, it begins to rapidly molt. The molting effect causes the target to shed 10% of its scales immediately. By the end of one turn, another 10% of the scales are shed, and again after an additional turn passes, another 10% of the target's scales are shed. For every 10% of the target's scales that are shed, the target effectively receives a -1 penalty to its Armor Class. As a result, after 21 rounds, the target suffers a -3 penalty to its Armor Class.

Unlike the rapid pace at which molting occurs, new scales regrow at a rate of only 10% of the surface area per tenday. As a result, it takes a full 30 days before the target of this spell reverts to its normal Armor Class.

The degenerative effects of this spell can be halted (but not reversed) by means of a *dispel magic*, *remove curse*, or *cure disease* spell. Only a *heal*, *limited wish*, or *wish* spell can speed recovery from the effects of an *ecdysis* spell.

Note that scales shed as a result of this spell rapidly decay into dust and are useless as material components for other spells.

(When cast as a priest spell rather than a dragon spell, the material components for this spell are the priest's holy symbol and a reptilian scale of any type.)

3rd Level

Dire Chant (Pr 3; Conjuraction/Summoning)

Sphere: Combat, Necromantic
Range: 0
Components: V(V)
Duration: Special
Casting Time: Special (Special)
Area of Effect: Dragon fear radius
Saving Throw: None

A *dire chant* is a draconic variant of the common *chant* and *prayer* spells. This spell creates a sense of impending doom and an aura of decay and lowers the temperature to just above freezing within the area of effect. (If the temperature in the area is already below freezing, this spell has no effect on the temperature.)

Within the area of effect of a *dire chant*, opponents of the spellcaster suffer a -2 penalty to morale, attack, and damage rolls and most saving throws. Saving throws vs. dragon fear, *cause fear* spells, and similar effects suffer a -4 penalty.

Normally the duration of a *dire chant* extends for as long as the spellcaster continues to chant. Note that chanting precludes additional spellcasting (although not innate or granted powers, but including dragon spellcasting with the normal verbal-only compound), bite attacks, or the use of a normal weapon.

In subterranean and enclosed settings, a *dire chant* need only be uttered for one round. The natural acoustics of the enclosed area are magically augmented to echo the initial *dire chant* for 10 additional rounds after the spellcaster ceases to chant, regardless of how long the spellcaster chose to chant before letting the magical echoes continue the effect.



The Forgotten Realms are home to numerous practitioners of magic and many variations of the more common wizard and rogue spellcasting professions, including spellcasters and shadow walkers (detailed in *Wizards and Rogues of the Realms*). Numerous specialist wizards of different schools of magic practice their Art in the Realms, although all are rarer than the mage or bard. This appendix details a school of magic unique to the Realms whose rare practitioners are near legend in the lore of the Realms: the school of incantation.

Spells of the school of incantation affect the casting of magic. (This school subsumes the category/school of metamagic, briefly discussed in the *Tome of Magic*). Such spells may enhance or reduce the effectiveness of other spells (as do those of metamagic), disrupt the magic of other spellcasters, banish summoned creatures from other planes, or shield the spellcaster from magical attack. Although the school of incantation has a fairly limited spell selection of low-level spells, such spells are very effective when used in battle with other spellcasters. The school of incantation magic can be subdivided into four categories of spells, and only the spells copy and the *Simbul's synostodweomer* fall outside of these classifications. These groups are:

Metamagic Spells: This group includes spells that enhance or reduce the effectiveness of other spells such as *alacrity*; *augmentation I & II*; *dilation I & II*; *far reaching I, II, & III*; *extension I, II, & III*; *greater malison*; *maladweomer*; *minor malison*; *Mordenkainen's celerity*; *Rary's mnemonic enhancer*; *Rary's spell enhancer*; *Rary's superior spell enhancer*; and *squaring the circle*.

Incantatrixes (specialist wizards in the school of incantation) have developed reversed versions of the *augmentation*, *dilation*, *far reaching*, and *extension* spells that can be used to minimize the effectiveness of an opponent's magic (a successful saving throw vs. spell negates the spell, and the range is 10 feet per level).

Disruptive Spells: This group includes spells that disrupt magical wards and a spellcasting opponent's ability to cast spells such as *curse of forgetfulness*, *dispel magic*, *dispel possession*, *disruption*, *draincone*, *dweomer vortex*, *feeblemind*, *forget*, *knock*, *maze*, *Mordenkainen's involuntary wizardry*, *Otto's chime of release*, *power word stun*, *ruby ray of reversal*, *steal enchantment*, *stealspell*, and *unbinding*.

Banishment Spells: This group includes spells that banish summoned creatures back to their own plane of existence such as *banishment*, *dismissal*, and *power word banishment*.

Shielding Spells: This group includes spells that shield an incantatrix from the magic of other spellcasters such as *Bigby's interposing hand*, *Drawmij's marvelous shield*, *forcecage*, *globe of invulnerability*, *minor globe of invulnerability*, *minor spell turning*, *mystic shield*, *mystic sphere*, *prismatic sphere*, *prismatic wall*, *Rary's mind shield*, *shield*, *spell turning*, *wall of force*, and *weirdshield*.

List of Spells From the School of Incantation

Spells in italics are reversible. PFTM=Pages From the Mages; PHB=Player's Handbook; ToM=Tome of Magic; CotD=Cult of the Dragon; WSC=Wizard's Spell Compendium volumes. Note that all spells from the *Player's Handbook*, *Tome of Magic*, and *Pages From the Mages* and some of the spells in this volume are also found in the *Wizard's Spell Compendium* volumes.

copy (Wiz 1; WSC)
 Otto's chime of release (Wiz 1; WSC)
 shield (Wiz 1; PHB)
 forget (Wiz 2; PHB)
 knock (Wiz 2; PHB)
 sense shifting (Wiz 2; Metamagic; ToM)
 alacrity (Wiz 3; Metamagic; ToM)
 augmentation I (Wiz 3; Metamagic; ToM)
 charmthwart (Wiz 3; Metamagic; CotD)
 Drawmij's marvelous shield (3rd, WSC)
 dispel magic (Wiz 3; PHB)
 far reaching I (Wiz 3; Metamagic; ToM)
 minor malison (Wiz 3; ToM)
 squaring the circle (Wiz 3; Metamagic; ToM)
 dweomer vortex (Wiz 3; WSC)
 dilution I (Wiz 4; Metamagic; ToM)
 extension I (Wiz 4; Metamagic; PHB)
 far reaching II (Wiz 4; Metamagic; ToM)
 forcefend (Wiz 4; Metamagic; CotD)
 greater malison (Wiz 4; ToM)
 maladweomer (Wiz 3; CotD, below)
 minor globe of invulnerability (Wiz 4; PHB)
 minor spell turning (Wiz 4; Metamagic; ToM)
 Mordenkainen's celerity (Wiz 4; Metamagic; PHB)
 Rary's mnemonic enhancer (Wiz 4; Metamagic; PHB)
 Rary's spell enhancer (Wiz 4; Metamagic; CotD)
 spelltouch (Wiz 4; Metamagic; CotD)
 Bigby's interposing hand (Wiz 5; PHB)
 dismissal (Wiz 5; PHB)
 extension II (Wiz 5; Metamagic; PHB)
 far reaching III (Wiz 5; Metamagic; ToM)
 feeblemind (Wiz 5; PHB)
 Jonstal's double wizardry (Wiz 5; Metamagic; WSC)
 lower resistance (Wiz 5; Metamagic; ToM)
 magic staff (Wiz 5; Metamagic; ToM)
 Mordenkainen's involuntary wizardry (Wiz 5; WSC)
 pierce magic resistance (Wiz 5; Metamagic; CotD)
 Rary's mind shield (Wiz 5; WSC)
 Rary's superior spell enhancer (Wiz 5; Metamagic; CotD)
 wall of force (Wiz 5; PHB)
 augmentation II (Wiz 6; Metamagic; ToM)
 contingency (Wiz 6; Metamagic; PHB)
 dilution II (Wiz 6; Metamagic; ToM)
 dispel possession (Wiz 6; CotD, below)
 dweomerburst (Wiz 6; Metamagic; CotD)
 extension III (Wiz 6; Metamagic; PHB)
 globe of invulnerability (Wiz 6; PHB)
 Jonstal's improved double wizardry (Wiz 6; Metamagic; WSC)



Mordenkainen's lucubration (Wiz 6; Metamagic; PHB)
Rary's urgent utterance (Wiz 6; Metamagic; CotD)
banishment (Wiz 7; PHB)
curse of forgetfulness (Wiz 7; WSC)
draincone (Wiz 7; WSC)
forcecage (Wiz 7; PHB)
intensify summoning (Wiz 7; Metamagic; ToM)
Mordenkainen's penultimate cogitation (Wiz 7; Metamagic; CotD)
persistence (Wiz 7; Metamagic; CotD)
power word, stun (Wiz 7; PHB)
ruby ray of reversal (Wiz 7; PFTM)
semipermanency (Wiz 7; Metamagic; CotD)
the Simbul's synostodweomer (Wiz 7; PFTM)
spell turning (Wiz 7; PHB)
steal enchantment (Wiz 7; Metamagic; ToM)
stealspell (Wiz 7; CotD, below)
weirdshield (Wiz 7; WSC)
maze (Wiz 8; PHB)
mystic shield (Wiz 8; WSC)
permanency (Wiz 8; Metamagic; PHB)
prismatic wall (Wiz 8; PHB)
spellcaster (Wiz 8; Metamagic; CotD)
absorption (Wiz 9; Metamagic; CotD)
Algarth's embattlement (Wiz 9; Metamagic; CotD)
Allisandro's binding curse (Wiz 9; Metamagic; WSC)
chain contingency (Wiz 9; Metamagic; ToM)
combine (Wiz 9; Metamagic; CotD)
disruption (Wiz 9; WSC)
Mordenkainen's disjunction (Wiz 9; Metamagic; PHB)
mystic sphere (Wiz 9; WSC)
pierce any shield (Wiz 9; Metamagic; CotD)
power word, banishment (Wiz 9; WSC)
prismatic sphere (Wiz 9; PHB)
Sammaster's conjunction (Wiz 9; Metamagic; CotD)
Sathrah's ingenious recollection (Wiz 9; Metamagic; WSC)
spellstrike (Wiz 9; Metamagic; PFTM)
triad gem (Wiz 9; Metamagic; CotD)
unbinding (Wiz 9; CotD, below)

The Incantatrix

Incantatrixes (or incantatars, the infrequently encountered male form) are specialist wizards in the school of incantation. Incantatrixes have been discovered only in western Faerûn, and rarely more than a handful are well-known in any generation. Currently there are only seven widely known living incantatrixes and two suspected incantatars (male incantatrixes) in the Realms, but probably a few hundred total labor in relative anonymity.

An incantatrix is a mysterious type of wizard who is weaker in many ways than some mages but is adept at countering and negating the magics of other spellcasting creatures and individuals and at dealing with creatures who exist simultaneously on more than one plane (such as certain undead beings). At the same time, incantatrixes are severely limited in their choice of offensive magics and are woefully weak in physical combat of any sort.

Incantatrixes tend to act independently, but because they have similar aims and interests, they sometimes join together in loose coalitions to combat common foes— notably those individuals who use magic in a dangerous, irresponsible manner. An incantatrix seeks to police the unrestrained use of magic about her abode, or challenge (not always openly) such uses that she observes elsewhere, much like a druid protecting his or her forest and other forests in the region. Incantatrixes seem to particularly dislike those who often create *gates* (or portals) or otherwise compel or allow creatures to enter the Prime Material Plane from other planes, and they thus often oppose specialist conjurers and elementalists.

Because of the large number of opposition schools barred to an incantatrix and the relatively small scope of the school of incantation, particularly at low levels, low-level incantatrixes rarely actively adventure, preferring to study, and may thus be more useful as NPCs. Incantatrixes who do adventure typically seek out only specific types of foes against whom their abilities are particularly suited. A few such spellcasters adventure with powerful groups of fighters and priests who can shield the incantatrix from physical combat, allowing the incantatrix to employ her skills against enemy spellcasters and creatures who exist simultaneously on more than one plane.

Specialist Name: Incantatrix (female), incantatar (male). The more common term *incantatrix* is used throughout this appendix to refer to both female and male specialists in the school of incantation. (Almost all known specialists in the school of incantation have been female, but this is not a requirement of the class.) Incantatrixes are occasionally referred to as *metamages*, but this term is not strictly correct.

Allowed Races: Incantatrixes must be humans or half-elves.

Ability Requirements: A minimum Intelligence of 13 and Wisdom of 12 are required to become an incantatrix because this school of magic demands strong intuition and exceptional willpower to police the unrestrained use of magic by other wizards and to confront creatures from other planes. If the subabilities from the *PLAYER'S OPTION: Skills & Powers* hardcover book are being used, a minimum Reason of 13, Intuition of 12, and Willpower of 12 are required.

Saving Throw Modifiers: The saving throws of all opponents are penalized by -1 when saving against an incantation spell cast by an incantatrix. An incantatrix receives a +1 bonus to her saving throws against incantation magic or magical devices duplicating these effects.

Oppositional Schools: An incantatrix cannot learn spells from the schools of conjuration/summoning, invocation/evocation, illusion/phantasm, or necromancy that are not cross-listed in either the school of incantation, alteration, and/or abjuration. They cannot cast any wild magic spells.

Bonus Spells, Acquired Powers, and Special Hindrances: An incantatrix can memorize one extra spell at each spell level available providing that at least one of the memorized spells is from the school of incantation; thus a



1st-level incantatrix can memorize two 1st-level spells, as long as at least one is in the school of incantation.

An incantatrix receives a bonus of +15% when learning spells from the school of incantation and a penalty of -15% when learning spells from all other schools (except the schools of abjuration and lesser divination, for which there is no bonus or penalty).

An incantatrix automatically gains one new spell from the school of incantation to add to her spellbooks each time she gains a new spell level. No roll for learning the spell need be made. When researching new spells from the school of incantation, an incantatrix has an easier time of it (as per the rules in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* and the *Complete Wizard's Handbook*), similar to other specialist wizards.

An incantatrix gains the spellcraft proficiency as a bonus nonweapon proficiency. An incantatrix is not allowed to take any weapon style specialization proficiencies or weapon group proficiencies (as detailed in the *Complete Fighter's Handbook* and *PLAYER'S OPTION: Skills & Powers* hardcover books. An incantatrix never receives more than two weapon proficiencies total. An incantatrix is forbidden from taking "combat" nonweapon proficiencies such as blindfighting and tumbling.

At 3rd level, an incantatrix gains the ability to *see ethereal creatures*, including out-of-phase creatures and those employing temporary magics such as spells or magical items. This ability works so long as the incantatrix is on any plane that the Ethereal Plane permeates (such as the Prime Material), and the ethereal creature occupies an equivalent Ethereal Plane position within 30 feet of the incantatrix's location.

At 4th level, an incantatrix gains the ability to physically or magically attack creatures who are out of phase, ethereal, blinking rapidly about (as in the wizard spell *blink* and similar effects), and so on. For magical attacks of this sort, the incantatrix may use any spell except *stealspell*, *ruby ray of reversal*, or *unbinding*.

At 6th level, an incantatrix gains immunity to the level-draining powers of creatures employing energies from the Negative Material Plane, such as xeg-yi and many undead.

At 8th level, an incantatrix gains a +6 bonus to her spellcraft nonweapon proficiency checks.

At 20th level an incantatrix gains a still-mysterious ability to drain magic from an item or device that has charges and use the magical force to restore her own vitality. To use this power, the incantatrix must remain still and hold the item to be drained with her bare hand or hands for one round per charge drained. The power does not work on permanent items that have no charges, artifacts, or relics. It cannot be used to augment or restore spells or magical items possessed by the incantatrix, but only as a modified form of *cure light wounds* magic: One drained charge gains 1d8 hit points for the incantatrix.

An incantatrix can use this ability before combat to temporarily augment her hit points above her normal maximum, but this does not raise her level or Hit Dice for purposes of spellcasting, saving throws, and the like. These extra "phantom" hit points last for only 1 turn before their energy is forever lost, but any magical or physical damage

suffered by the incantatrix during that turn diminishes and exhausts the phantom hit points before the incantatrix suffers any real hit point damage.

If the optional rules for training giving in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* are used, the incantatrix may find it extremely difficult to find an appropriate tutor. Although a senior incantatrix of at least one level higher than the new level is preferred, an incantatrix may be trained by a mage or abjurer of at least three levels higher than the new level to be obtained by the incantatrix.

Spells

3rd Level

Maladweomer (Wiz 3; Alteration) *Reversible*

Range: 10 yards
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 round /level
Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: One creature
Saving Throw: Neg.

By means of this spell, a wizard causes any and all spells and spell-like powers cast or wielded by a target creature, including items used, to be at the nadir of their effectiveness; that is, any damage caused by offensive magics is the minimum possible, saving throws against such magics are enhanced by a +4 bonus, and spells that are extant (such as magical charms) and ongoing (at the time the *maladweomer* takes effect are altered in efficacy. (For instance, a charmed individual who had previously failed to save against the spell would immediately be allowed another saving throw with the +4 bonus.)

The material component for this spell is a small clear glass or crystal prism that is smashed (with a weapon blow, and/or against a wall, rock, or floor) in the spellcasting.

The reverse, *dweomerboost* (or *empradweomer*), permits all magic to be cast or wielded by the recipient creature during one round to be of maximum efficiency (maximum damage and effects) for that time. If the caster succeeds at a saving throw vs. spell at the end of the first round, the *dweomerboost* lasts a second round.

While the material component is the same as for *maladweomer*, the crystal need not be smashed; rather, it vanishes when spellcasting is complete.

Both forms of the spell can be cast upon the wizard, so *maladweomer* would enable a wizard to lessen his or her powers when compelled to work magic against his or her wishes.

6th Level

Dispel Possession

(Wiz 6; Abjuration, Necromancy)

Range:
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 2 rounds/level
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: One creature
Saving Throw: None



By means of this spell, a spellcaster can temporarily free a recipient creature from the effects of any *charm*-type spell (or other magic-based mental dominations and controls), psionic attack or domination, or *ESP* or similar eavesdropping magics. If *dispel possession* is cast upon the body of the victim of a prior *magic jar* spell, the life force controlling the victim's body is driven out of the stolen body back into its *jar*. If the *jar* is not within range of the body (see the *magic jar* description in the *Player's Handbook*) when the *dispel possession* is cast, the life force is merely quelled for the duration of the spell, allowing the mind of the true owner of the body to reassert itself and temporarily regain control of its body.

By application of this spell, a *charm* is forever broken, but other mental attacks and controls resume at the spell expiration.

The material component of this spell is a teardrop from the eye of a human, elf, or half-elf.

7th Level

Stealspell (Wiz 7; Enchantment/Charm)

Range: 10 yards/level
Components: V, S
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 7
Area of Effect: One spellcaster
Saving Throw: Neg.

By means of this incantation, any single spellcaster chosen by the caster must save vs. spell at -1 or suffer the theft of any one memorized spell from his or her mind. The stolen spell is determined randomly; the identity of the stolen spell is not revealed by its theft. If no spells are available, the *stealspell* is wasted. Magical devices and spell-like abilities are unaffected.

The stolen spell is transferred at the end of the round in which the *stealspell* is cast. A spell in the process of being cast cannot be stolen. The magic of the *stealspell* works in spite of all known shielding spells save *antimagic shell*.

A stolen spell can be cast immediately by the user of this spell or held in mind up to 24 hours. The casting can be made without understanding or sufficient level to cast the stolen spell (or even the correct class to normally do so). Any spell cast in this fashion is cast as if by the being from whom the spell was stolen.

While the spell itself has no material components, any material components required by the stolen spell and carried by the original owner are expended at the time the spell is stolen.

This powerful magical spell is rarely known beyond the circles of the Witches of Rashemen and incantatrixes.

9th Level

Unbinding (Wiz 9; Abjuration)

Range: 0
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 3 rounds
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: 20-foot-radius sphere
Saving Throw: None

When an *unbinding* spell is cast, a sphere of magical force comes into being about the caster and is mobile with the caster. The magical effect of this sphere destroys any spell that contains or constrains with the exceptions noted below. All spells that seal are immediately ended.

The *unbinding* negates *charm* and *hold* spells of all types, *wizard locks* and similar closures, spells that create physical or magical barriers, *guards and wards*, *temporal stasis*, *slow*, and *time stop* spells, among others. The effects of a *statue* spell are ended, and a *magic jar* is shattered—forever destroyed, and the life force within snuffed out. Even an *imprisoned* creature beneath the caster's feet emerges as though a *freedom* spell had been cast forth. In addition, all spells that hold magical effects, including other spells, immediately release their effect at a range of 0 (*magic mouth*, *Rary's mnemonic enhancer*, *imbue undead with spell ability*, *contingency*, and so on).

Protective spells such as *protection from evil*, *shield*, *minor globe of invulnerability*, *globe of invulnerability*, and similar spells are not affected by an *unbinding*. Petrified creatures are neither revealed nor restored. Individuals bound to service are not freed (including creatures such as familiars, invisible stalkers, genies, and elementals). An *antimagic shell* is not affected, nor will the effects of *unbinding* penetrate one. Protective circles and similar confining runic constructions are not affected unless they currently hold a creature imprisoned, in which case they are erased, or if that is physically impossible, become ineffective as other than decorations.

Curses, *quest*, and *geas* spells are negated only if the wizard casting the *unbinding* spell is of a level equal to or greater than that of the original caster. The interaction of this spell with artifacts and relics is adjudicated by the DM.

These effects occur regardless of the caster's wishes. Spell effects on the person of the caster, or being carried or worn by him or her, remain undisturbed, but any others are affected, even those of allies. Note that the opening of magical seals and closures triggers any alarms or traps attached to them and that any released creature may or may not be friendly to the caster. The caster cannot shorten this spell, save by dispelling it.

The material components of this spell are a lodestone and a pinch of saltpeter.





Cult of the Dragon

by Dale Donovan

No longer can the members of one of the most infamous clandestine organizations in all the Realms lurk in their comfortable shadows. No more can these men, women, dragons, dracoliches, and . . . others . . . scheme to subjugate all that is good and true while the rest of Faerûn waits unaware. For centuries has the evil secret society founded by the mad mage and Chosen of Mystra, Sannaster, labored secretly—well, no more!

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